How to Use This Tool

Understanding Racial Disparity in Your CoC

Each community has unique circumstances impacting homeless populations. The CoC Analysis Tool draws on Point-In-Time Count and American Community Survey data to facilitate analysis of racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness. Such an analysis is a critical first step in identifying and changing racial and ethnic bias in our systems and services.

How to Use the Tool

Select a CoC from the dropdown at the top of the Dashboard tab. The charts and tables will automatically populate with local and state data.

The first bar chart shows racial distributions for the selected CoC for all people living in poverty, people experiencing homelessness, and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. By comparing racial distributions between persons experiencing homelessness and persons experiencing poverty, we are able to identify racial disparities in homelessness that poverty alone cannot account for.

The bar charts also include the racial distribution for individuals in families with children who were experiencing homelessness. Note: for these individuals, the race data is based on the racial identity of the head of household. It is a proxy and may not accurately represent the racial identity of all household members.

The bar chart in the center and on the right show the racial disparities for youth and veterans experiencing homelessness, respectively.

The next set of bar charts in the Dashboard displays the distribution of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic groups in the same configurations, enabling a comparison between rates of poverty and rates of homelessness amongst singles, families, youth, and veterans.

The CoC Data tables below the charts include the data that is represented in the charts as well as additional detail, including overall racial distribution in the CoC and racial distribution among persons experiencing sheltered homelessness.
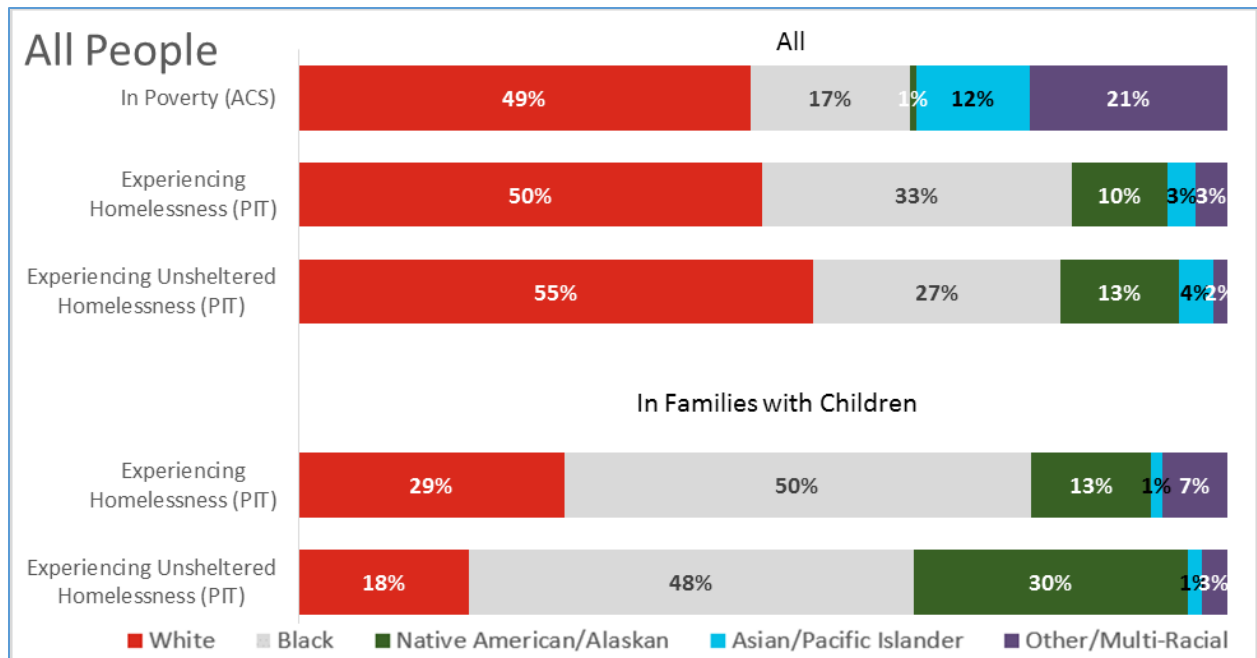
Example Reading of Distribution of Race Chart

For example, when reading the chart below, we see that 17% of all people living in poverty in the CoC identified as Black in the 2013-2017 American Community Survey. We also see that 33% of people experiencing homelessness in the Point-In-Time Count identified as Black. This demonstrates a large racial disparity in homelessness, beyond the impact of poverty alone. What other factors might contribute to this disparity?

Looking at families with children experiencing homelessness in this sample CoC, though we see that 29% of those living in poverty are white, only 18% of people in families with children that are experiencing homelessness are white.

Note: Race data for individuals in families is based on the racial identity of the head of household. It is a proxy and may not accurately represent the racial identity of all household members.

Example Reading of a CoC Data Table

In this example CoC, 23% of people in families with children are Hispanic. We see higher rates of Hispanic ethnicity when we look at families in poverty, at 30%, and even higher rates for families experiencing homelessness, at 45%.

CoC Data												
	All (ACS)[1]				In Poverty (ACS)[1]				Experiencing Homelessness (PIT)[2]			
	All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children	
Race and Ethnicity	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All People	276,517		202,599		38,630		18,856		1,125		148	
Race												
White	235,058	85%	177,393	88%	31,743	82%	15,494	82%	901	80%	132	89%
Black	5,682	2%	2,369	1%	1,225	3%	598	3%	65	6%	0	0%
Native American/Alaskan	2,005	1%	1,947	1%	233	1%	114	1%	79	7%	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	10,411	4%	5,557	3%	1,526	4%	738	4%	26	2%	2	1%
Other/Multi-Racial	23,361	8%	15,333	8%	3,903	10%	1,912	10%	54	5%	14	9%
Ethnicity												
Hispanic	60,181	22%	45,943	23%	11,641	30%	5,682	30%	209	19%	66	45%
Non-Hispanic	216,336	78%	156,656	77%	26,989	70%	13,174	70%	916	81%	82	55%

Technical Notes

1. When you first open the document, select Enable Content in the yellow bar.
2. If you get a pop-up asking to make it a trusted document, select "Yes"
3. In order to best view the charts and tables on your monitor or for printing, you may need to adjust the zoom in the lower right corner of the Excel window.
4. Scroll to the right to view all three bar graphs and two data tables.
5. Percentages of 5% or less might be difficult to view in the charts at the top of the page, but can be referenced in the corresponding tables below.

6.   If you see #### instead of a number in a cell, widen the column until you can see the numbers.
7.   Blank cells in the tables indicate that data is not available for that subpopulation.

Do NOT…
1.   Hide rows below 87 on the DASHBOARD tab. These are necessary for the charts.
2.   Modify table cells on the DASHBOARD tab. Doing so will overwrite the formulas.

Methodology

Definition and Data Sources for Homelessness

The number of people experiencing homelessness represented in this tool is drawn from the 2019 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count data reported in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to the U.S Congress. PIT Counts are unduplicated 1-night estimates of sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations conducted by CoCs nationwide during the last week of January each year.

People who are experiencing **sheltered homelessness** are defined as "an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals," as defined at 24 CFR 578.3 of the Homeless Definition Final Rule.

People who are experiencing **unsheltered homelessness** are defined as "an individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground," as defined at 24 CFR 578.3 of the Homeless Definition Final Rule.

For more information on homelessness definitions, see the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Defining Homeless Final Rule: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1928/hearth-defining-homeless-final-rule/

PIT Count data is not perfect- methodologies vary place to place and year to year; the unsheltered count is particularly challenging. While some CoC PIT data may include duplication of households, it is more likely that PIT data is an undercount, due to not all homeless households being identified. Staffing, weather, and geography all have an impact on the data. In most communities there remains a need for improved data accuracy and increased cultural competence in outreach and engagement.

Nevertheless, PIT Count Data is an important indicator to consider, and our best available estimate of rates of homelessness in a given community. More information on the PIT Count and AHAR can be found here: https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/ahar/

Definition and Data Sources for Poverty and Race

Individuals are counted as being in poverty if they are part of a household whose total annual income is less than the poverty threshold. Threshold levels are set by household size, but are not adjusted by location. For this reason, the impact of poverty on housing affordability varies from community to

community. For more information on how poverty is measured, see: https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/about.html

The racial distributions of people living in poverty are sourced from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2017 5-year estimates. Tract estimates were pulled from the census TIGER data found at: https://www2.census.gov/geo/tiger/TIGER_DP/2017ACS/ACS_2017_5YR_TRACT.gdb.zip. For this analysis, the following tables were used:

- ACS2017_RACE_tract.csv
- ACS2017_ETHNICITY_tract.csv
- ACS2017_AGE_tract.csv
- ACS2017_VETERAN_tract.csv
- ACS2017_POVERTY_tract.csv

Race data for individuals in families is based on the racial identity of the head of household. It is a proxy and may not accurately represent the racial identity of all household members.

The race categories used in this analysis may not accurately reflect the racial identities and lived experience of individuals. The availability of this data, however imperfect, provides a starting place to examine racial disparities in each CoC.

The CoC estimates were aggregated from Tract estimates, using a Tract-to-CoC crosswalk that was created with ArcGIS mapping software. For consistency (especiallly for statewide CoCs), the state estimates were aggregated in the same way and, as a result, may look slightly different from the state-level estimates available directly from the ACS.

Estimates of individuals "In Families with Children" are calculated from the number of families in the given category, by race, multiplied by the average family household size for the given category, by race. For example:

Black people in families with children = Number of black families with children * average black family household size

Estimates of total youth come from a proxy variable capturing the number of households where the householder (an ACS term consistent with "head of household" in the PIT Count) is under 25 years old. This is a reasonable estimate of the number of unaccompanied youth, and is thus slightly more comparable to the homelessness numbers from the PIT, which include "unaccompanied youth and parenting persons under 25 years old."

More information about the ACS can be found here: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/programs.xhtml?program=acs

Updates from Version 1
There are three methodology updates since version 1:

1. In Version 1, data were pulled at the Block Group (BG) level. Since not all data points are available at the BG level, county proportions were used in many cases. In Version 2, all data are pulled at the Tract level.

2. In Version 1, the number of individuals in families with children may have been overestimates because the underlying variables did not distinguish families with children from families without children. In Version 2, the calculation of individuals in families with children makes this distinction (see above calculation). Though this change impacted the estimated number of individuals in families, it had a relatively small impact on the race breakouts of individuals in families. The results we see are that this approach tends to bring the degree to which families with children in poverty are White down (by 6% on average) and the degree to which those same families are Black and in the "other" category up (by 2% each on average). Native and Asian breakouts were stable. The differences were not tremendous and we believe this represents an improvement to the methodology.

3. In Version 1, the number of youth reflected the number of people under 25 years old. In Version 2, to be more aligned to the PIT data which focus on unaccompanied and parenting youth, the number of youth reflects the number of households with the householder under 25 years old (see note on youth above).

Next Steps

Discussion Questions for your CoC

1. How does your CoC compare to state numbers. Are any racial groups over- or under-represented among the homeless population in your CoC?
2. Are there specific local or state conditions that might lead to these differences?
3. In PIT counts, are there significant differences between sheltered and unsheltered counts as far as over- or under-representation? Why might that be?
4. Are there differences between families and individuals in terms of racial distribution?
5. What does the youth data look like compared to all households? What about youth in families with children?
6. What about veterans in your community? What do you know about your own community that gives context to the data?

Additional Data Available & Recommended Analysis

In order to best understand whether racial disparities are impacting people's experience of homelessness in a given community, stakeholders should look at multiple data sources. This tool helps communities identify disparities in who experiences homelessness in their CoC, but does not shed light on how the homeless service system is serving communities of color. Fortunately, other data sources and visualization tools are available to support taking the next step with that analysis.

Additional resources

- [NAEH: Racial Disparities in Homelessness in the United States](#)
- [USICH: How to Start Addressing Racial Disparities in Your Community](#)

Longitudinal Systems Analysis and Stella Performance

In 2018, the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) replaced the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) as the primary mechanism for reporting demographic and system use data to HUD. The LSA

includes data on households served in HMIS-participating shelter and permanent housing projects. More information about the LSA can be found here: https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/lsa/

Stella Performance (Stella P) is a visualization tool based on the LSA data, highlighting system performance for households that have been served in HMIS participating programs during the report period. Performance measures include:

- The length of time people spend homeless and in the service system (Days Homeless),
- Successfully exiting homelessness to permanent housing (Exits), and
- The degree to which households that are housed then fall back into homelessness (Returns).

Stella P supports CoCs in understanding how their homeless crisis response system is serving households that belong to difference race and ethnicity groups through the Population Group analysis for each of the above performance measures.

In addition, Stella P includes race and ethnicity distributions for households served in different project types in the Demographic Comparison section.

Stella P is available to CoCs through the HDX 2.0. More information about Stella can be found here: https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/stella/

Coordinated Entry: Access, Assessment, Prioritization, and Referral

Though coordinated entry (CE) data has not yet been incorporated into either of the available HUD tools, new coordinated entry data collection requirements mean that it may become possible to include CE data in HUD's data visualization tools in the future. More details about these data elements can be found in the FY2020 HMIS Data Standards: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/

CoCs are encouraged to conduct their own equity analyses of their coordinated entry systems. Some of these analyses suggest that CE assessments may be perpetuating racial and ethnic inequities. For more information and to learn to from such findings, please see the report **Coordinated Entry Systems Racial Equity Analysis of Assessment Data** released by C4 Innovations in October 2019: https://c4innovates.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CES_Racial_Equity_Analysis_2019-.pdf

Qualitative Data

To understand how race and ethnicity disparities are playing out in the homeless crisis response system and what to do about it, communities will need to look beyond the numbers. System planning and evaluation should include input from people with lived experience of homelessness, members of race and ethnic groups that have been historically marginalized, and front line staff who work directly with people experiencing homelessness. For more information, see: https://www.hudexchange.info/news/snaps-in-focus-integrating-persons-with-lived-experiences-in-our-efforts-to-prevent-and-end-homelessness/

HUD Tools Available to Support Racial Equity Analysis

General Population (ACS)

People Experiencing Poverty (ACS)

People Experiencing Homelessness (PIT)

People Served by the Homeless Crisis Response System (LSA)

This Tool

Future Tool