2020-2021 Winter Guidance to CoC:

General Winter Guidance to CoC:

This document is to help communicate several recommendations and important steps during the winter months. There are both suggestions for regions and individual organizations as well as specific steps the CoC BoS board and/or IHCDA are taking to provide statewide assistance. There are also several links and resources available from state, local, and federal officials. At the end of the document, there is specific guidance for the 2021 Point in Time Count. Please review this full document and contact Elby Hilton, Director of Community Services at elhilton@ihcda.in.gov with any additional questions or concerns.

Contents

Overall:

Regions should:

- Continue to host meetings virtually.
- Continue to educate staff, volunteers, and clients about COVID-19.
- Use official guidance from the IDH and CDC.
- Create a regional contingency and communication plan.
- Follow BoS CoC guidance and 2020 disaster policy.

Specific Winter Guidance

White flag shelters/warming options/winter shelters:

White flag shelters and other warming options are made available during most winter months. These shelters should continue but extra precautions should be in place because of COVID-19. At a minimum, these shelters should follow the below linked guidance from the CDC and HUD on sheltering large groups. Specifically, organizations should offer PPE to all clients/volunteers/staff, provide beds that are socially distanced, and offer education to clients/volunteers/staff. The CoC highly encourages these shelters to work with their Regional Council and/or Regional Chair closely during the time the winter shelters are open.

- Follow CDC guidance: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html
- Follow HUD shelter checklist: https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-COVID-19-Preparedness-Checklist-for-Shelter-Facilities.pdf
- Indianapolis plan/example: https://www.chipindy.org/news

Regions:

The BoS CoC recommends strong communication and collaboration across each region. Specifically, the BoS CoC asks that each Regional Council take the following steps:

Contingency & Communication Plans

- Create a regional winter contingency plan. At a minimum, this should incorporate what will happen if an outbreak occurs within the region, how to shelter individuals who test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19, a communication plan across all organizations within the CoC, an overflow plan, and shelter options for sever weather.
- Create a communication plan and one point of contact for regions to provide individuals a safe place to warm and quarantine.
- Use HUD's examples here: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6193/covid19-homeless-system-response-winter-planning-resources/
- This plan should be shared with IHCDA once completed. Plans can be emailed to Elby Hilton at elhilton@ihcda.in.gov

Vaccine Distribution Guidance

IHCDA and the BoS CoC are working with IDH on a vaccine distribution plan. Regions should review and understand how this will work in their region. As more information is available IHCDA and the BoS CoC will share with all regional chairs.

- Vaccines distribution plan:
    - When a vaccine is available IDH will communicate plan to CoC through IHCDA. IHCDA/board will communicate to regions.
    - Front line health care providers will receive vaccines first.
    - IDH did include homeless shelters in their plan at a second-tier level.
    - Regions should share and understand vaccine distribution guidance from the Indiana Department of Health (IDH).
        - https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/Indiana%20COVID-19%20Vaccination%20Plan_%20Interim%20Draft.pdf
        - https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/COVID-19%20provider%20enrollment%20FAQ%2010.21.20.pdf
    - For more information on public health guidance and coordination, see the section below.

Funding:

Regions should consider coordination of funds through the winter to support these activities. The BoS CoC recommends a written fundraising plan if time allows.

- IHCDA has funding available to support these activities.
    - The $25,000 funds available from IHCDA are available to assist in this planning. Additional funding will be announced by IHCDA and can be requested if this amount runs out.
    - RSO funding: Through the CARES Act, IHCDA has ESG funding available to support shelter operations and outreach. The funding can be applied for monthly and new organizations are welcome. If an organization is interested in applying for these funds, they should contact Kristin Garvey at krgarvey@ihcda.in.gov.

Tools/Examples:

The BoS CoC recommends using best practices and well tested tools. Examples can be found here:

- https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Alternative-Approaches-to-Winter-Sheltering-During-COVID-19.pdf
- Other examples: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6193/covid19-homeless-system-response-winter-planning-resources/

Public Health Guidance & Coordination:

The BoS CoC and IHCDA are working with IDH health officials to coordinate statewide efforts for individuals experiencing homelessness and reducing their risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes recommendations on what should occur to assist this population. The BoS CoC board recommends each region reviews and implements these recommendations with local public health officials.

Recommendation to Public Health Officials:

The BoS CoC recommends to public health officials that:

- Homeless and domestic violence shelters remain "essential services".
- They should not be asked to shut down even when a positive COVID-19 case presents itself.
- The CoC through IHCDA will provide regional plan and statewide isolation plan to IDH.

Regional Coordination with Local Public Health Officials:

The BoS CoC recommends regions take the following actions with local public health officials:

- Connect with local public health department and share regional plan for isolation for symptoms and positive tests.
    - Local health departments can provide rapid testing and flu shots for clients.
- Connect with IDH rapid response team in instances where testing or guidance is needed locally.
    - Contact: Tiffany Robitaille, RN, BSN| *COVID Congregate Care RN*
    - Epidemiology Resource Center
    - Email: trobitaille@isdh.in.gov
- If an organization has a COVID-19 outbreak they should contact and work with their local health department immediately.

National Guidance:

The CoC BoS board recommends organizations and regions follow official guidance from state, local, and federal officials. Below are several helpful links from the CDC.

CDC Guidance

- Contact tracing flow chart: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html
    - This section provides steps and consideration that jurisdictions can use to develop a protocol **for** the **tracing** of close **contacts**.
- Screening Clients for COVID-19 at Homeless Shelters or Encampments
    - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/screening-clients-respiratory-infection-symptoms.html
- COVID-19 Guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing
    - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/shared-congregate-house/guidance-shared-congregate-housing.html
- Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html
- For clients with mild respiratory <u>symptoms</u> consistent with COVID-19:
  - Prioritize these clients for individual rooms.
  - If individual rooms are not available, consider using a large, well-ventilated room.
  - Keep mats/beds at least 6 feet apart.
  - Use temporary barriers between mats/beds, such as curtains.
  - Align mats/beds so clients sleep head-to-toe.
  - If possible, designate a separate bathroom for these clients.
  - If areas where these clients can stay are not available in the facility, facilitate transfer to a quarantine site.
- For clients with confirmed COVID-19, regardless of symptoms:
  - Prioritize these clients for individual rooms.
  - If more than one person has tested positive, these clients can stay in the same area.
  - Designate a separate bathroom for these clients.
  - Follow CDC recommendations for how to prevent further spread in your facility such as staggering meal services or having maximum occupancy limits for common rooms and bathrooms.
    - If areas where these clients can stay are not available in the facility, assist with transfer to an isolation site while maintaining safe transmission guidelines.
  - All clients should wear masks any time they are not in their room or on their bed/mat (in shared sleeping areas). Masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Information on how to differentiate COVID from flu.
  - https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm
- Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
  - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html

Healthcare for the Homeless

- General guidance/resource page: https://nhchc.org/clinical-practice/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=e829891d80-SNAPS-COVID-19-Digest-04-9-20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-e829891d80-19574233
- Responding to unsheltered individuals during Covid-19: https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NHCHC_Unsheltered-Homelessness_Final.pdf?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=e829891d80-SNAPS-COVID-19-Digest-04-9-20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-e829891d80-19574233
- How to use PPE: https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NHCHC_PPE_Final.pdf?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&ut

m_campaign=e829891d80-SNAPS-COVID-19-Digest-04-9-20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-e829891d80-19574233

Other CoC Examples

- COVID-19 screening questionnaire: https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-homeless-screener-with-temp-and-screening-supply-list.xlsx.pdf?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=ba87e9a276-SNAPS-COVID-19-Digest-04-15-2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-ba87e9a276-19574233
- Hospital discharge workflow: https://cceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-Hospital-Discharge-Homeless-Workflow-050420-FINAL.pdf
- Guidelines for establishing hotel/motels as quarantine locations: https://cohhio.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Guidelines-for-establishing-H.M-I.Q-REV-4-6-201-1.pdf?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=e829891d80-SNAPS-COVID-19-Digest-04-9-20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-e829891d80-19574233

Other guidance

- Hotel guidance on sheltering options: https://www.ahla.com/sites/default/files/hotels_-_hospital_conversion_and_ops_playbook_final_0_0.pdf?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=54e43edd62-SNAPS-COVID-19-Digest-04-27-2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-54e43edd62-19414145
- NAACP equity and Covid 19 resources: https://naacp.org/coronavirus/coronavirus-resources/?utm_source=HUD+Exchange+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=f20e5d5591-SNAPS-COVID-19-Digest-04-13-2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f32b935a5f-f20e5d5591-19574233
- EPA disinfectant guidance: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19

2021 Point in Time (PIT) Count Guidance:

Based on the [HUD guidance](#) and the COVID-19 levels in Indiana, the BoS CoC board has approved the following updates to the 2021 Point in Time count. There may be additional changes or guidance made to the field as the PIT approaches. This may include additional restrictions from the BoS CoC board based on increases in COVID-19 cases and/or additional county or statewide restrictions. IHCDA staff will communicate those changes when and if they occur.

- The BoS CoC will have an unsheltered and sheltered count in 2021.
- Regions will have the option to opt out if their area is quarantined or public health officials have advised again.
  - Regions must communicate this update to the HMIS team via email by the day before the 2021 PIT count. PIT Coordinators must submit the following information to HMIS@ihcda.in.gov to be approved for this exemption:
    - PIT Coordinator name, Regional Chair name, rationale for opting out of unsheltered count.
    - Please CC your Regional Chair on this request.
    - IHCDA staff will review and respond with an approval via email. Please keep this approval for your records
    - Please note, your region will still be required to conduct a sheltered count.
- Regions will be REQUIRED to implement the following actions with their PIT Count:
  - Waivers from the organization of the PIT Coordinator are required and must include language about COVID-19 and the risk they are taking in this count. The liability of conducting a PIT count lies with the PIT Coordinator's organization.
  - PPE is required to conduct the count for all volunteers and staff. Volunteers and staff should also be trained on proper use of PPE and safety precautions.
  - Regions should work with their local public health officials on training all on safety and precautions. As well discuss when they would not conduct a PIT Count.
- Other updates:
  - IHCDA can provide funds for PPE.
    - Requests can be sent to elhilton@ihcda.in.gov.
  - IHCDA staff will include IDH on PIT volunteer webinar to train on safety pre-cautions.
  - IHCDA staff and CoC BoS board are not responsible for individuals who test positive because of this event.

IHCDA staff is working with HUD to communicatee the above updates. They will also communicate methodology changes to the PIT Count. Those include but are not limited to a longer collection period, a shorter survey, and an observation only/head count change to their methodology. IHCDA staff will communicate the approved updates as they come through. IHCDA will also reach out to all PIT Coordinators on next steps (i.e. PIT training, survey updates, etc.). Please watch for those updates from the HMIS team.