

# EVH - S1EP31 - Understanding the Point-in-Time Count

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**Shawn Liu:** Welcome to Ending Veteran Homelessness, your first hand look into our nation's efforts to ensure that every Veteran has a safe and stable place to call home. From the Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Programs Office, I'm your host, Shawn Liu.

If you're a Veteran who's homeless or at risk of homelessness, reach out.

Call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-424-3838. Trained counselors are standing by to help 24 hours a day, [00:01:00] 7 days a week. That number again is 877-424-3838.

Whenever I talk about the significant progress that we've made to reduce and ultimately end Veteran homelessness, I usually reference the same data source over and over again, the Point-in-Time Count.

The Point-in-Time Count, or PIT Count, is the annual effort from our partners at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness in America, including Veterans. Each year, usually on the coldest night of the year, around the end of January, our community partners and tens of thousands of volunteers go out and try to count as many people experiencing homelessness as they can.

I often refer to it as homeless person's census.

At VA, the data gathered during each PIT Count is unbelievably valuable, both in terms of measuring our year over year progress, but also to [00:02:00] inform

how we deploy new resources and technical assistance. Given the PIT Count's importance in our work, it's probably a good idea to devote an episode to talk about some specifics on how it happens.

How is it conducted? What specifically does it tell us about Veteran homelessness? And how can folks participate if they feel called to?

Those are really great questions.

So to help us better understand the important role the PIT Count plays in ending Veteran homelessness, I can think of no one better to talk to than Mr. William Snow.

Mr. Snow is a Senior Program Specialist with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Let's go ahead and dive on in.

William, welcome to the show!

**William Snow:** Thanks. Happy to be here.

**Shawn Liu:** Yeah, really great to have you.

I wanna acknowledge this is airing on November 11th. It is Veterans Day. So happy Veterans Day to everybody who's served in the US Armed Forces.

I hope William and I continue to honor your service with the work that we do to help reduce and ultimately end Veteran homelessness.

Usually on this show I have folks from VA. A lot of times in the Homeless [00:03:00] Programs Office. But every now and again, I get to have on one of our interagency partners, and so I'm really honored that you took the time out of your day to chat with us about the PIT Count, which I understand you've been heavily involved with for quite a while now.

But before we get into the PIT Count, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your role over at HUD?

**William Snow:** Thanks, Shawn. It is a pleasure to be here. Again, Happy Veterans Day, as Shawn shared. This work is amazing.

As has been said, I'm William Snow, pronouns he/him. I work in HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs, the SNAPS Office, and we are in charge of preventing and ending homelessness.

I actually started in my position at HUD about 15 years ago working on this very issue of the Point-in-Time Count and the Housing Inventory Count. It was my job to call communities and make sure we understand data and track errors. And I essentially stayed with that work ever since.

And now I'm in a position where I am our data policy lead responsible for establishing the Point-in-Time Count [00:04:00] requirements along with other reporting requirements from our office. And trying to do our best to not just collect the data, but to tell the story that goes along with the data and help people understand just how important it is to use data to prevent and end homelessness.

**Shawn Liu:** Yeah, that's fantastic. And also full disclosure, you and I have actually worked together for several years, and I actually don't know that I've heard your bio. It sounds like you and I have similar histories. I'm about 15, 16 years. into federal service. And right out of the gate, similar to you, was homelessness.

And I've been here ever since and worked my way up, similar to you. So I'm sure for, similar to you, with me this has been both a passion, a labor of love, but also a really righteous, important subpopulation. You could be in a lot of different other components of HUD, but you're here with us in homelessness.

And you have a way broader view. Me and VA, I just focus on one sub population of people experiencing homelessness, Veterans. But your perspective is way broader. You actually are focusing on [00:05:00] everybody who experiences homelessness, men, women, children, LGBTQ+ rural, urban. Everybody. It's a really big mission.

**William Snow:** Absolutely. But what a pleasure it is too. And I was actually considering how long we've worked with the VA specifically. It wasn't always a smooth road, but what a great journey it's been. And I feel like we have such a great partnership with the VA on counting our Veterans in addition to serving our Veterans.

Thanks for that good reminder there. And also just such a pleasure to be part of the work focusing on Veterans along with the other

**Shawn Liu:** populations. Yeah, yeah, couldn't agree more.

Let's dive on into our subject, for which you are, like, one of the key experts in our country. So I hope I did the setup justice about what the PIT Count is from a high level. Fingers crossed, because it's what I say during presentations, so if I've been getting it wrong the entire time... ew, cringe.

But since you are kind of like one of the major SMEs in our country for the PIT Count, just give us, from your perspective and your expertise, what is the PIT Count and why is it important? Like, why do we do this [00:06:00] count every year?

**William Snow:** Yeah, it's a great question. It's a lot of work. You got to hope that it actually means something and that it results in improvement in our ability to make progress.

Simply said, the Point-in-Time Count is just that. It's a snapshot or a point in time where we count the people experiencing both sheltered, which means people living in emergency shelters, or transitional housings, as well as people who are in unsheltered homeless situations, meaning sleeping outside. That could be in cars, it could be in temporary sheds, it could be in other situations that maybe you're familiar with, right? Sleeping outside on a bench, it may be something that you're familiar with and have seen.

So that is what is encompassed by the Point-in-Time Count.

But the why is so critical. We need to understand who's experiencing homelessness. We need to know how to serve them and who they are. We need to know what does it look like in terms of how we engage them as well.

What is different about the Point-in-Time Count from other data sets is that [00:07:00] it doesn't just focus on people who have engaged in services. That's going to have a necessary but real bias tied to it. We like to understand who we're serving and how they're being served. But just as important is knowing who's not coming to our system, who's refusing or prefers not to be served. We need to understand who they are so that we can get a better picture of how we can find them to give them the services they want.

**Shawn Liu:** Yeah, those are really great points, and you reminded me of something that one of my dear, dear friends in the industry shared when we were talking about some of the new innovations that we could do to end Veteran

homelessness, and she said, "Shawn, simply put, you can't solve a problem that you can't scope."

If you don't have a sense of how large the problem or the different dimensions to it it just doesn't work. It's almost like a tautology or self evident truth. You just can't do it.

And you have to be able to understand the scope of an issue so that you can wrap your hands around it and develop strategies that are effective, that you can test.

And so the PIT Count, year over year, has been really important.

[00:08:00] The other thing that you brought up that I thought was so critical, because every now and again, we in the Homeless Programs Office at VA, we'll get inquiries, whether it be from representatives from Congress, or a city or county government. And they want to know, how many Veterans are homeless right now?

And that's a tough one to answer, especially with VA data, and you brought up the reason why, which is, at VA, right now, our data systems only look at the Veterans that we serve, the Veterans that actually come into our doors that we help.

So I can tell you how many homeless Veterans were served by VA homeless program. I could totally do that. I can tell you how many homeless Veterans are being served by VA broadly, but I actually can't tell you how many Veterans who are homeless, because at VA right now, we're looking at that service data.. I know there's a lot of movement afoot to resolve that and to actually get some better, more up to date, real time data.

And that's a lot of it in partnership with us at VA, with your team at HUD.

But as of right now, yeah, I can only really see the folks who've made it into the door.

And so the PIT Count, as you described, is absolutely that. It provides [00:09:00] really important information and insights on everybody, whether or not they're coming into the door at VA, or even other services like charities and nonprofits in local communities all across the country.

William, can you share a little bit about how we go about conducting the PIT Count? I've personally, earlier in my career, and actually even lately go out with my local community here in the town that I live in, and I volunteer at the PIT Count. Usually we drive in cars, I go into the downtown area, because that's usually where I'm assigned to, get a stack of surveys, and I start...

But is it that straightforward as you get a bunch of volunteers, you drive around town and you do a little check box and count, like how actually is the PIT Count conducted?

**William Snow:** Yeah, that's a fun one. Some people do think it's that straightforward. It absolutely is not. There's hours...

**Shawn Liu:** Definitely couldn't be...

**William Snow:** Weeks and months that go into it. Yeah, never.

The PIT Count is, we start with the guidance that we provide. So HUD doesn't do the PIT Count. We don't count in every community. What we do is we establish parameters. We have a Point-in-Time Count methodology [00:10:00] guide. It is actually relatively old now because the methodologies have been around for a very long time. And it establishes what is acceptable when you do your sheltered count. I will say that most sheltered counts are primarily coming from administrative data now. Which is great. Our data should be in that place.

But the unsheltered count is really what gets people. And that's the one that requires so much work. The unsheltered count has only a few approved methodologies. I think some people think it's the Wild West out there and people are doing all sorts of counts.

No, there are actually only a couple different methodologies allowable in the context of HUD's supported Point-in-Time Count, and that's essentially going out and observing people sleeping out. If you're going to use an observation based count, that has to be done in the dark hours of the night. It has to happen when people are sleeping and not still moving around. Has to be done By people who have training that typically includes a group of both street outreach workers or homeless service [00:11:00] providers, in addition to volunteers who receive training on how to do that.

Or another methodology is to conduct the count using interviews. That's the most common. We think that's probably the most valid form that gives you accuracy. You can confirm if somebody's actually experiencing homelessness.

You can confirm important things like demographics. Those things should not be assumed. They should be confirmed by the people who we are associating as being homeless.

And so those are your core methodologies, actually. Beyond that, communities have the flexibility to determine how am I going to do that in my community? Am I solely going to use street outreach workers? Am I going to be able to use a large volunteer base? If so, how do I train them? What are the resources I'm going to use?

Communities are smart. We trust communities to be able to implement these things. So our guidance is simply to provide very high level, you've got to make sure you're doing these type things, big standards, in terms of the methodology guidance and let communities go and implement.

We also publish a notice. Usually each year, sometimes we actually hold onto the [00:12:00] notice from a previous year, like we're going to do for 2025. And we allow communities to understand what the minimum elements are. Communities can decide how much they want to collect beyond what HUD's minimum requirements are. But as is clear from the title, they are minimum requirements. We need things like demographics, Veteran status, chronic homeless status. Those are really critical for us getting a baseline and help us tell the story about who actually is out there. Do we see a difference in our unsheltered population from our sheltered population in terms of demographics? Very important to understand. That's the guidance that we provide.

We then let loose with the COCs, or the Continuums of Care. The Continuums of Care then conduct the counts. They determine exactly what makes the most sense in the community, which volunteer base to use, if any, or whether they're just going to rely on providers and street outreach workers, and they go and even pick the dates.

We require that the counts start in the last 10 days of January. If they're doing observation, that's all going [00:13:00] to happen in one night. If they're doing interviews, that could happen over the course of a week. And they're going to go and implement in the way, again, that is most sensitive to the people who are being interviewed or being counted, in addition to the availability and sensitivity of those conducting the counts.

We're grateful for the volunteers we get across the country. You have a range of how COCs use volunteers. You have places like Los Angeles that have Thousands of volunteers across the county and then you have areas like Fairfax,

Virginia that rely almost solely on street outreach staff and other homeless providers. That's all okay. It's all based on local context. Again, as long as they're following the basic parameters we outlined in the methodology guide and our notice regarding what's the minimum....

**Shawn Liu:** Yeah. And we're going to put links to the methodology guide and the notice, at least last year's notice, and I heard you mention that there's a good chance that last year's notice, we'll just carry over to this upcoming PIT Count in January of 2025. So we'll put links to both of those in the description, because I know somebody listening will want to click on it and see for [00:14:00] themselves.

William, this has been really helpful. I also want to acknowledge that we largely had you on to talk about the PIT Count broadly. We're actually not going to be revealing any results of the PIT Count just yet. Those aren't ready yet. And we'll talk a little bit more about where folks can deep dive into previous year's results as well as where the new results will be whenever they are ready.

So we're going to talk a little bit more later on in the episode.

William you, you've shared a little bit already with the data elements. About what is collected and what the PIT Count tells us, things like Veteran status, demographics, whether or not somebody's chronic homelessness.

There's a lot of other information that communities have, what I heard from you, beyond the minimum things that they should gather and collect that they could. Can you share a little bit, just from a high level now, what are some of the other things that the PIT Count may inform or tell us about homelessness year over year. And then importantly as well, are there some limitations to what the PIT Count can't or [00:15:00] doesn't tell that we maybe need to have other systems to look into or other components to think about?

**William Snow:** That's one of my favorite questions actually. Some folks think that we at HUD believe that the PIT Count is the end all, be all. That it tells the whole story and you don't have to look outside of that. That is absolutely not the case. Having other data sets is really critical. And that gets at the limitations themselves.

So the Point-in-Time Count is just that. It's conducting a count in the middle of winter. It's a single 10-day period, so it's focused on a very limited time frame. Those are really important things, parameters that we use for the Point-in-Time



Count. We chose winter based on years of research tied to how do we count the most people at a given time .

We found that doing it in January, doesn't feel very compassionate, especially to our volunteers. But we actually find that is when we find the most number of people experiencing homelessness. So we chose that.

But if you're trying to figure out what's happening in the summer in Chicago, yeah, that's going to be a different story than what you see in the PIT Count in the [00:16:00] winter in Chicago or other areas. And we recognize that's a limitation of the PIT Count. It is not intended, also, in addition to the seasonality aspect, it's not intended to get at the annual number of people experiencing homelessness. It is just a point in time.

It's a little terrifying if you think about it, that we find 600,000 people in the middle of winter on a given night, and many of them are sleeping outside.

That's not a good story. It's painful to think about, painful to hear, and unfortunately we continue to see Veterans in that count as well. Though the progress has been really phenomenal over the past several years regarding that.

But that progress is actually one of the reasons we use the PIT Count. It is a litmus test that we use every single year. It tells us the trend, so it doesn't, again, tell us the total number of people served in a year, but it does tell me, does the volume of people in any given area look similar or different than it did in the past year? How about five years ago? How about 10 years ago? What are we seeing? Are we seeing shifts, not only in the sheer numbers, but do we see [00:17:00] shifts in populations? Are more people and families showing up? Are we seeing more or less Veterans? That is what the PIT Count is for.

And it is focused on people in sheltered and unsheltered situations. That doesn't mean that other populations don't exist. We know that many people experience homelessness in doubled up situations. We also know that many people may transition from streets to shelter to doubled up to other situation and back on the streets. The Point-in-Time Count is not intended to capture that information. It's just the wrong vehicle.

You'd have to have something like the census to do that, and the census gets billions of dollars to do that every 10 years. We couldn't impose that on communities, nor would we want to, it's not realistic.

But it is very helpful to at least understand this context of how many are in shelters? How many are sleeping on the streets? How many are in situations that really are often considered some of the most dire experiences of homelessness? We want to know that.

But then you take that information and you layer it [00:18:00] with whatever other homeless information you can get. We have an annual homeless assessment report that looks at the state of homelessness over the course of a year. It doesn't have data on people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, but it tells us who's interacting with our systems. How many are there? Are their demographics similar to what in the PIT Count? Those are really important measures.

We also have other data that gets at more outcome based data, right?

So, our system performance measures doesn't just tell us how many are there. It tells us where are they going. Are they exiting homelessness? Are they returning after becoming homeless, but being placed in permanent housing? That's all critical, and the Point-in-Time Count simply helps us center the starting point.

How many at any given point are experiencing homelessness, and what does that look like? And then use the other data sets to tell us, "Hey, there's a much broader picture here. What's going..."

**Shawn Liu:** Yeah, that's really helpful context. And I know that in, especially in the last five, seven, eight years, I've been part of a lot of discussions, I'm sure you probably have been too, about the [00:19:00] PIT Count's limitations, what it can do, what it can't do. I really appreciate you bringing in what it was intended to do and the acknowledgement of the things that we need to add, to supplement, to get a whole picture.

And really a big thing that I heard from you, though, is that outside of its known limitations or maybe imperfections that some may quibble with, there's still meaning, like really important meaning that is derived from this year-over-year comparison. And we actually can do a lot of really important work with that meaning, even given everything that you've just shared.

I also wanted to do a shout out really quickly and rep for women Veterans for a second because you've mentioned, that the PIT Count actually doesn't capture folks who are living in doubled up or couch surfing circumstances.

And one of the things that we both suspect and probably know is that for women or households with minor children, women given some of the limitations of shelter availability in communities, they may experience homelessness more frequently in [00:20:00] those doubled up couch surfing situations. And yeah, everybody's frustrated at that part.

And you're right, though, that the PIT Count really captures some of the more physiologically dangerous, especially unsheltered homelessness, where you're out exposed to the elements, you're under bridges it's changing seasons now, it's getting colder out there.

And that's a known thing. But it's incumbent upon us to also find meaningful solutions to help those folks who are displaced, who are unstably housed, or experiencing homelessness in doubled up circumstances. We don't want people to be left behind as part of the process.

But you're right, that the PIT Count's intention was this particular scope, this particular window of housing instability and homelessness.

And you brought up another really important bit, and I want to maybe touch on another hot button question that we get every so often, oftentimes from really important stakeholders, especially when they look at the number of Veterans who are homeless each year in the PIT Count when compared to our budget. Listeners will know that our last episode, last month, we actually focused on the Homeless [00:21:00] Programs Office budget, our \$3.2 billion budget, and where all that money goes.

And we've had some very pointed, I would say fair, questions from various Congressional members, leaders, asking, "Shawn, William, if, by your own data, there was only 35,574 Veterans in the 2023 PIT Count, and you got this \$3.2 billion budget, what's the deal? Why can't you just house all of them?" And then maybe they'll do some back of the napkin math, do a per capita. It's that's a lot of money per person. What's the deal? Why is it just 35,000? Can't you just house them all tomorrow, and we'd be done?

And you touched on this, and I would love for you to reflect a little bit more about the fact that it is a snapshot, and that homelessness evolves over the course of a given year.

Fluctuates, changes, goes up, goes down. Can you share your thoughts about how you've responded to those type of questions?

**William Snow:** Yeah, funding is a great challenge. We love that problem of grappling with how do [00:22:00] we tell the story with funding, because that means that there are funders out there. We appreciate that. But it is not an easy one to answer.

There are a few ways we think about how the PIT Count impacts funding. First, we do not and we don't recommend that others use PIT Count as a primary factor for determining how much funding any given community should get. There are factors that impact the PIT Count that may make them go up or down based on things that communities may or may not have control over. We want to be cautious about huge fluctuations in how much any community gets in terms of funding.

One reason is, I know, at least for HUD, our Continuum of Care program, which is the largest competitive program in the country, we're at over \$3 billion, and a lot of that funds permanent housing projects that have people in them right now, today. And if we were to change the amount of funding given to any given community any given year, what that would likely result in is uncertainty for the people who are currently in a housing situation, and then [00:23:00] would have to be grappling with this idea of, "All right well, our community got less funding this year, which projects are in, which projects are out." That's not a fair way to approach funding. It's important, at least from our standpoint, we avoid the Point-in-Time Count as a primary factor.

Now, we do look at it. It is something that is included in our competitive process. We look at that in concert with other elements, like what is going on with performance data, other outcome measures. And we'll look at critical partnerships and coordinated efforts including for many years we looked at specific efforts tied to the VA and tied to Veterans, and we still look at some of that. We don't want to lose sight of the things that are not as easy to quantify, but very important for the effective functioning of a system.

Now I'm going to approach your question around why don't we just do a massive infusion of funding and just end this problem today. That would be great. I will say that we actually have gotten large infusions of funding over the past several years, [00:24:00] including new programs like the Supportive Services for Veteran Family Program, SSVF. That came largely as a result of using the Point-in-Time Count data, watching trends, seeing what the needs are, and taking that information to Congress and saying, "Hey, if you help us do this kind of program, we can make an impact."

And we have! The data reflects that. We've seen a reduction in Veteran homelessness since 2010. Over 50% reduction, and we hope to see more. And we believe all the efforts that are going on now will actually drive us to get further down so that homelessness for Veterans is a rare concept.

But, there is a reason that one infusion of funding doesn't just end the issue. We see a large inflow of people experiencing homelessness every single year. For example, in the last year, when we look at our system performance measure data, we actually look at those experiencing first time homeless. We're talking nearly a million people experiencing homelessness for the first time, over the course of a year. [00:25:00] That's going to show up in the Point-in-Time Count. Naturally, you're going to have new people coming in.

Now, at the same time, we have a large number of people being served, placed in permanent housing and exiting the system. So the Point-in-Time Count, again, doesn't give you details about how many are coming in and how many are going out. Rather, it tells you at a point in time how many are in.

And so when we think about how do we just finish the problem, you actually have to take into account those other data sets, those other pieces of information that tell us, "Ooh, how many people are coming in? And do we have the resources to help them exit? And how quickly can we do that?"

So that's where most of the funding and resources go. They actually go to permanent housing resources that allow us to quickly place people who are experiencing homelessness into a permanent housing setting.

But there's ongoing needs there. And once you place someone, we don't just leave them there a month and then ditch them. They actually maintain that permanent housing, and that's a critical way that they maintain their stability and stay out of homelessness.

The [00:26:00] resources we received are primarily focused on addressing their long term permanent housing needs. But we continue to see an inflow each year. And so one time funding won't solve the problem until we can address the issue of how do we prevent our Veterans from ever experiencing homelessness in the...

**Shawn Liu:** Yeah really great points all around. And you touched on something that I heard a lot, especially earlier in my career, where, you know, a lot of communities felt like they had to demonstrate the need. They had to show that their number of people experiencing homelessness were in their community

were so big. And they thought, in a misguided attempt, that's how you get the funding to address it, by showing the big need. And that's... some of that might still be true, not as much in the real world. Accuracy of data, accuracy of performance outcomes is really important.

And I think, the idea of you have folks coming into the system over the course of the year, and you have folks exiting the system, and even though they exit the system, many of them still need supports, and all of that costs money.

And so it's not just a one and done, we house all 35,000 homeless Veterans, and then we [00:27:00] call it a day. One of the things that has been shared with me is an analogy of like a checkbook or like a bank balance. And if folks will forgive the dehumanizing analogy, I actually think it's meaningful. Where with a checkbook, you have a, or a bank balance, I don't know how many people use checks anymore in 2024. But you have a starting balance. You have debits, you have credits, money coming in, money going out, and then you have an ending balance.

And in some instances, homelessness is like that, where you'll have the PIT Count of the prior year being your starting balance, you'll have folks coming into the system, newly homeless, or folks returning to homelessness. All of them cost money to support. Folks exiting the system and going into permanent housing, so folks leaving the system and all of that costs money to continue to not only get them housed, but also keep them housed and continue to support them so they stay housed. And then the following year, you have your ending balance.

So what we're seeing is that in 2022, we had 33,129 Veterans. In 2023 that actually [00:28:00] increased by 7% to 35,574. So what we can speculate over the course of that year is that essentially more Veterans entered homelessness than who exited, either through our programs or were able to resolve it on their own, and that's why the ending balance, the 2023 PIT Count, was higher. And that our goal, ultimately, to reduce and end Veteran homelessness, is that we want to, over the course of a year, house more Veterans than who become homeless. And that's actually how you get the PIT Count to reduce, and year-over-year reductions.

It's, I like, sometimes I like that analogy, even though it's not quite the most humanizing analogy, because we're talking about people, not money. But at least can help visualize how the people flows.

William, this has been fantastic. Before we let you go, I want to shift gears two more times. The first, where can folks go and learn more about the PIT Counts data and also if they want to volunteer to participate? You mentioned the Annual Homeless Assessment Report.

We're going to put a link to that as [00:29:00] well. So folks can go read the report. I'm sure you can probably recommend that they would go there. And we're going to put all the other links that we talked about in the description.

But where can folks go to learn more?

And if they want to actually be one of those volunteers, how do they get connected to participate?

**William Snow:** Yeah, I love that. I would start with where you said. If you want to know about what we've learned from the data in the past, we actually post not just the reports, so that would be the Annual Homeless Assessment Report. Part One specifically focuses on Point-in-Time Count, whereas Part Two focuses on that annual data on people served. So if you start with that, you'll understand what are we seeing. You can drill down even to your Continuum of Care or look at your state. I think we actually put data in Excel files as well, so if you're a data wonk and that's your preference, you have the opportunity to do that.

If your preference is to go out and serve, which we love, we think volunteers are the backbone here and are fantastic. What you need to do is reach out to your Continuum of Care. On the HUD exchange, there's a page about who the grantees are, and you [00:30:00] can select Continuums of Care. And there we have information on who to reach out to in your Continuum of Care. They are the ones who are organizing your counts.

I will give the caveat that, again, some COCs don't rely on volunteers for the purpose of the Point-in-Time Count. So it is possible that they're going to say, "Thank you for calling us. We have no need for you in this space this year." And they may have another opportunity for you. So I would totally take advantage of that. They may need you to help with a soup kitchen or some other opportunity in the area.

This is such a meaningful experience, though. I do the PIT Count every year because I write the rules, so I should implement them also.

**shawn-liu--he-they-\_3\_10-18-2024\_134405:** We're going to put links to the COC locator, the Continuum of Care locator, in the description as well so folks can find their local Continuum of Care.

William, this has been fantastic. I'm going to shift gears one last time. I'm going to end with a tradition on our show. We're going to end with why.

Folks know that I'm a civilian, that I've never served. But whenever I rep for Veterans out in the community, it's really important that I convey to folks that this is not just another job. I'm not just [00:31:00] collecting a paycheck, that I'm here for them. I'm here for the mission.

Now, you, like me, have been in homelessness for a while. You've definitely been a very close, valued partner in the Veteran homelessness sphere. Share with us before we let you go, what's your why for this work? You could have been working in any other, federal agency. You could have been working in a lot of different parts in HUD.

But you're here in the SNAPS Office with homelessness, and you're also here with us on an interagency level with Veteran homelessness. What's your why for this work?

**william-snow--hud--he-him-\_3\_10-18-2024\_134405:** The thing that motivates me in my job is seeing the importance of the individual.

We do a lot with data. I see lots of numbers fly around. I'm actually in charge of a lot of those numbers. But each one of them represents a human. Somebody who has a life of experience, who's important and deserves an opportunity to have the best that they possibly can.

And so I am motivated by that idea that I can play a role in helping somebody achieve that dream that they have and help them see beyond their current circumstance. It is a pleasure to be a part of that work and I love being able to do it.

**shawn-liu--he-they-\_3\_10-18-2024\_134405:** William Snow [00:32:00] is a Senior Program Specialist with the Special Needs Assistance Programs Office in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

William, thank you so much for the gift of your time.

**william-snow--hud--he-him-\_3\_10-18-2024\_134405:** Thank you.



**shawn-liu--he-they-\_3\_10-18-2024\_134405:** If you want to know more about the services that VA provides to Veterans experiencing homelessness and housing instability, visit us online at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless).

And if you're a Veteran who's homeless or at risk of homelessness, reach out. Call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-424-3838. Trained counselors are standing by to help. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. That number again is 877-424-3838.

That's all for this month. We hope that you found this time to be valuable and that you feel empowered in our collective work to ensure that every Veteran has a safe and stable place to call home.

Take care. [00:33:00]