Mobile Point-in-Time Count Survey Development

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Community Profile: **Tampa/Hillsborough County CoC**

- **Geography**: Hillsborough County, Florida
- **Area**: 1,266 square miles
- **Population**: 1.409 million people
- **Poverty Rate**: 15.7%

- **CoC & HMIS Lead and Collaborative Applicant**: Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Initiative
- **2018 CoC Award Amount**: $6,347,400
- **2019 PIT Count**: 1,650
### Tampa/Hillsborough County PIT Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>Unsheltered Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>1817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1795</td>
<td>1650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1091</td>
<td>756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Tampa/Hillsborough County CoC PIT Count Total and Unsheltered Count from 2014 to 2019
Point-in-Time Count Methodology
PIT Count Methodology

Sheltered Count:
- HMIS Data
- Some Provider Level Surveys

Unsheltered Count:
- Street Count (Complete Census)
- Service-based Count
- HMIS Data
Volunteer Training Options

- In-person
- Webinar
- Web-based Refresher
Why an Electronic PIT Survey?

• Save time and volunteers needed for data entry

• Improve data quality & access to real-time results

• Capture more accurate encampment location information

• Save trees!
Initial Reservations

• Would volunteers be open to using their personal devices and data for this purpose?

• Would we create barriers to volunteer participation?

• How would persons being surveyed perceive the use of personal devices?
Development Process
Development Timeline

- June 3-5, 2016: Hackathon
- July 3, 2018: Contract with Hyperion Data
- February 15, 2019: Beta Testing
- February 22, 2019: Volunteer Training Webinar
- February 28, 2019: PIT Count
Homeless Solutions Hackathon

“Gimme Shelter” themed CodaPalooza event June 3-5, 2016
• In conjunction with 2016 National Day of Civic Hacking
• Held by Tampa !nnovation Partnership and Code for Tampa Bay
• Teams of two or more developers
• Chose from 10 modules addressing homelessness
• Competed to develop technology-based solutions

More info:
Homeless Solutions Hackathon

• 120 people participated in teams of 2 or more
• Coders behind THHI’s Electronic PIT Survey = “TEAM SUPPORT”
• Code created for the app during Hackathon available on GitHub: https://github.com/code-for-tb/PITCensus
Hackathon to Development Contract

THHI released Request for Proposals that included deploying and testing the app

Different company selected, BUT was unsuccessful

Reached back out to the original developers and contracted with them

Contract included deliverables to:
- Get the app ready for use, including adding encryption
- Monitor the app during the 2019 PIT Count
- Export complete data set following the Count
Contract to Complete Development

• Additions to the base app:
  • Identify and set up server hosting and sub-domain
  • Encryption for privacy protection
  • Stress testing
  • Survey customization
  • Provide documentation for training, troubleshooting, and customization
Technical Details

• Cloud Server hosting: Amazon Web Services
• Survey development: SurveyJS  https://surveyjs.io
• Other Components:
  • PyMongo and MongoDB to store the data from the surveys in the database
  • PyGal to create the charts for the data
Key Features

- Conditional Logic
- GIS Tracking
- One-click data export
- User-friendly design
App Testing

• First round of testing completed internally by developers
• Beta Testing 2 weeks prior to Count
  • 20 minute time period
  • Invited volunteers to test the app
  • ~20 volunteers submitted 54 surveys during the test
  • Volunteers provided feedback about usability and functionality
App Training for Volunteers

• Webinar Training for App about 1 week ahead of the Count
• Encouraged volunteers to attend training
• Webinar recording made available for all volunteers
• If a volunteer did not receive app training, we still let them try it out on the day of the Count
Day of Count Experience

• Electronic Survey used by about 30% of volunteers (more than 100 volunteers)

• Use included:
  • Street Count Volunteers
  • Service-based Count
  • School social workers
  • Park Rangers

• No issues reported throughout the day

• Real-time data displayed at the COMMAND CENTER
Impact and Outcomes
Unsheltered Count

Old Process
- 300 – 500 Volunteers
- 600 – 800 Paper Surveys collected
- Surveys entered into HMIS by Data Entry Volunteers
- Data exported for analysis

New Process
- Volunteers enter survey data on their Cell Phones/Tablets
- Significantly reduced need for Data-Entry Volunteers
- One-click data export
Impact

✓ Streamlined data collection

✓ Reduced data entry time

✓ Increase accuracy of data

✓ GIS Locations for improved maps

✓ Real-time data available
COMMAND CENTER

• Real-time data displayed at COMMAND CENTER

• Social Media Campaign: Partnered with Sparkman Wharf & The Corners Pizza to give free pizza to volunteers

• Opportunity to engage with general public and volunteers

• Sparkman Wharf now regularly provides the space to non-profits free of charge
School District Involvement

• 39 School Social Workers at public high schools participated
• Surveyed all McKinney-Vento eligible students
• This year they used the electronic survey app
• Hillsborough County School District Homeless Liaison is key to this success
• Dashboard created using school data to facilitate conversations within school district
Volunteer Feedback

“LOVED the online survey and training related to that.”

“It felt like less of a barrier with a phone instead of a clipboard.”

“From a user-perspective, it was less cumbersome than the paper surveys”

View a blog highlighting the Electronic Survey here: https://trinitycafe.org/do-i-count/
Moving Forward

• Electronic Survey will be primary tool for the 2020 Count

• Training on Electronic Survey will be included in all volunteer trainings

• Paper surveys will remain an option
Start Using an Electronic Survey Locally

- THHI’s Electronic Point-in-Time Count Survey code is available open source on GitHub
  - [https://github.com/unityhmis/PITCensus](https://github.com/unityhmis/PITCensus)

- Host a “Hackathon” event locally
  - Connect with local innovation and technology groups

- Research ready to use Point-in-Time solutions

- The option that’s right for your CoC depends on a variety of factors
Questions or Comments

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