



North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care

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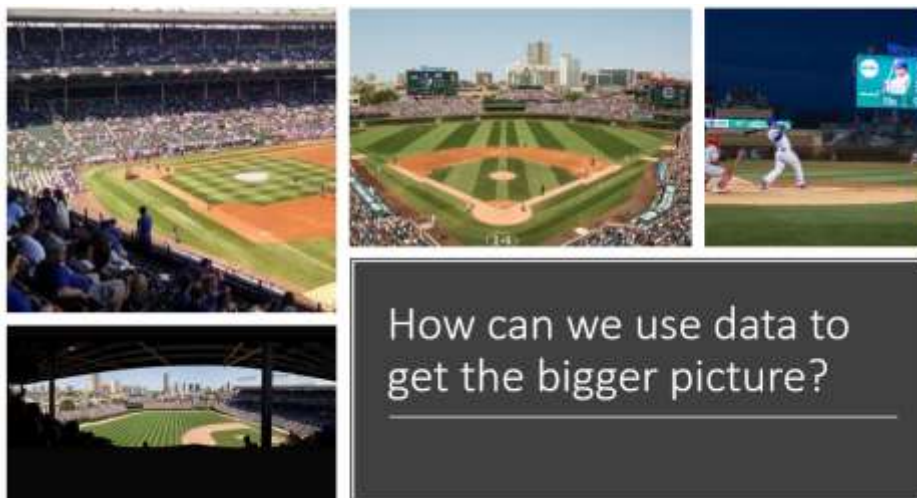
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Funding and Performance Subcommittee October – November: Developing a Dashboard

October: Data Driven Decisions

Getting to the Bigger Picture

The group discussed that looking at data from different perspectives helps us build the bigger picture of what is happening throughout the system, using the different vantage points of the same baseball game as an example.



The Data Pyramid

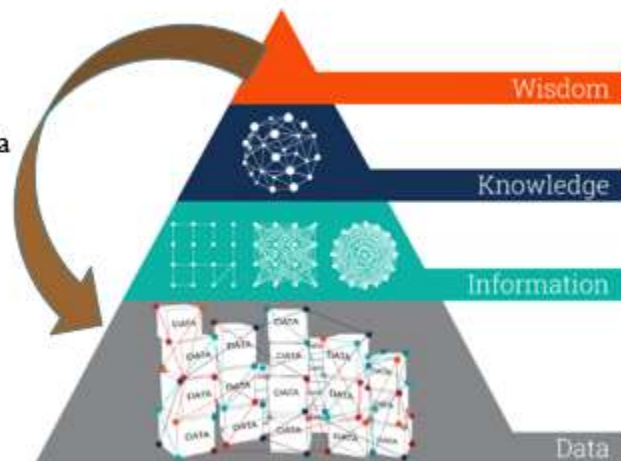
This concept comes from the Information Science and Knowledge Management fields, and widely used because it helps people conceptualize where people's thinking may be when it comes to data. The pyramid shape exists to suggest that a great deal of data is needed to create information, knowledge, and wisdom about a subject. It is helpful to think of this pyramid as uni-directional, meaning that as people gain knowledge and wisdom, it informs the type of data collected, how it is collected, and how it is used.

- In our field, data is all the elements collected in the HMIS system or even a big excel sheet with a portion of the information pulled out for us to use.

- Information comes from the work we do to organize and process the data, helping answer the questions “who, what, when, and where”. For example, this might look like a Point in Time Count that has charts that show who was counted, how many people were sheltered and unsheltered, and so forth.
- Knowledge is the use of data to answer the “how” questions – Using the same PIT example, it could be seeing the correlation between people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and also experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Finally, Wisdom is the act of taking what is known and putting it into action – for example, we understand that chronic homelessness is tied to access to housing, we might decide to target existing PSH units to end chronic homelessness in order to impact unsheltered homelessness.

Frequently, we’re in multiple stages of this pyramid at any one time! This model is helpful to consider as we simultaneously work with a great deal of data to build knowledge and wisdom amongst ourselves and our community partners.

- **WISDOM:** Putting the data into action.
- **KNOWLEDGE:** Transforming data into something that has meaning.
- **INFORMATION:** Processed data that is useable and significant.
- **DATA:** Numbers, words, or other symbols that represent objects, events, and their environments.



Data Audiences

As we share information and build knowledge around data, it is helpful to think about our audience. One model suggests that thinking of the role stakeholders play in relation to data helps give the right context to information when we’re talking about it and sharing it.

The group discussed examples of people in their regions who play different roles. Each of these roles is important to gather, analyze, and talk about data.

Ultimately, as a team, the goal is to work with the HMIS@NCCEH data analysts and researchers to act as data promoters.



Data User Role	Description
Data Consumer	Interested & engaged. New data may trigger them to move into a more active role. Typically have less experience with the data or lack understanding of the subject.
Data Actor	Act on and leverage the data to drive change. May have significant clout, staff, and content knowledge but limited time.
Data Promoter	Leverages data to create additional value: Informs, educates, or builds products around data. Multiplies the audience and may influence key partners.
Data Analyst	Uses data to create a deeper understanding. Has deep domain knowledge and extensive data knowledge.
Data Researcher	Works in the trenches to collect, analyze, and synthesize data for groups above. May perform data collection and analysis themselves.

Funding And Performance Subcommittee's Role:

- Work with HMIS@NCCEH to pull data from HMIS on a regular basis
- Work with Balance of State staff to create charts and data to share this information regularly with the subcommittee
- As a group, assess available information and develop a shared knowledge about what is happening in the Balance of State
- Discuss what steps might be taken to have greater impact and bring this wisdom to the Steering Committee and Regional partners.

Opportunities we can create through working with data:

- Create connections between things
- Help people organize their thinking
- Develop shared language and understanding
- Demonstrate impact of decisions
- Document gaps and challenges
- Create a call to action
- Serve as a catalyst or "stop light" during a planning process
- Keep key issues at the front of people's minds

The intent is to bring together the pieces of the puzzle so that we can have insight into our system – this will help us understand things like:

- What is the scope of our work?
- What are some of our major activities?
- What is happening over time?
- Is there any impact if we change how we do things



Dashboards:

Dashboards can be used to

- Demystify Data
- Replace complexity with insight
- Draw attention to important data
- Increase interactivity and exploration
- Develop strategies for impact

Working with our data will also help us meet the HEARTH Act's purpose "to establish a Federal goal of ensuring that individuals and families who become homeless return to permanent housing within 30 days" – Sec. 1002(b)

Dashboards help present the information gathered through reports. The BoS can use system measures to gain insight, reporting out on some key measures to support analysis such as:

- **Number of People Experiencing Homelessness**
Who are we solving homelessness for?
- **Length of Stay**
How quickly are we able to end homelessness for people?
- **Exits**
How many people are exiting the system, and where are they going?
- **Returns to Homelessness**
How effective are we at ending homelessness?

November: Available Data

When we think about the goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time only, we have to think as a system, and how all our work collectively impacts homelessness. We want to look at how many people are becoming homelessness, how we respond to the homeless crisis, how quickly we can connect people to permanent housing, and how we prevent people from becoming homeless again.

HUD has designed reports to help us measure this and requires that we submit our system measures as part of the CoC grant. Within the system measures, we can find a range of resources that we can use to start to think the Balance of State region and how we're impacting homelessness.

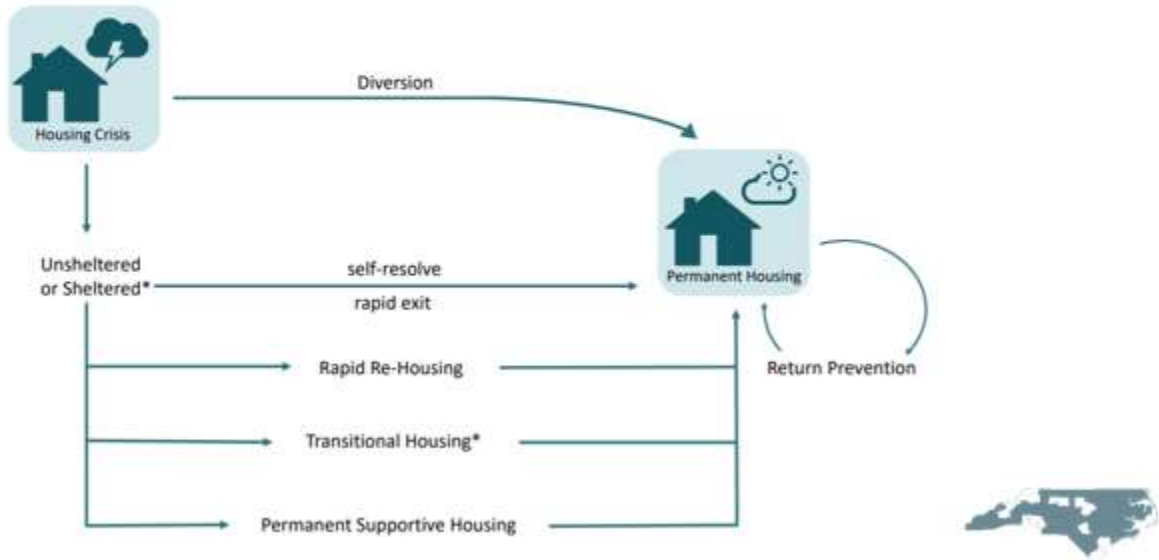
There are benefits to using data to drive decisions:

- Knowing how many people we serve helps us understand if we've got the right resources lined up.
- Understanding how long people stay in the system helps us understand how efficient we are, and how barriers to housing impact our work.



- Understanding where people are exiting to helps us hone in on strategies to increase exits to permanent housing.

How do we build a system that helps us ensure homelessness is RARE, BRIEF, and ONE TIME ONLY?

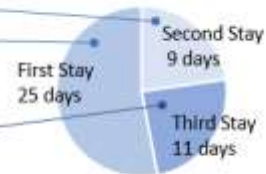


Data can be reported as a whole system, by project type, or by project. *Example: Length of Time Homeless (HMIS Report 0700)*

Length of Time Homeless
Client's total across all agencies/projects
(the whole CoC): 75 Days



Length of Time Homeless
Client's total at Agency B's Project: 45 Days



A good analogy when thinking about data is a kaleidoscope – while you are looking at the same data, depending on how you formulate your questions and filter the data, you’ll get a slightly different view. Some of the “views” we can use to look at the data come from System Performance measures.



System Performance Measures

What lens do we want to use to view our data?




Number of Homeless

How many...

- people are experiencing homelessness?
- families?
- Youth and Children?
- People experiencing Chronic Homelessness?
- Veterans?

How many people are accessing emergency shelter?
Transitional Housing?



Length of Time Homeless

What was the average length of stay for:

- Emergency Shelter?
- Transitional Housing?
- What is the average length of time to access permanent housing?



Return to Homelessness

What percent of people who exited from....

- Street Outreach
- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing
- Permanent Housing

....returned to homelessness?




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Exits and Retention of PH

For people coming from street outreach, emergency shelter, or transitional housing:

How many, and what percent exited to temporary or instructional destinations?

How many, and what percent of people who exited to permanent housing?



December: Formulating the Dashboard

Getting the Data for the Dashboard:

- We have Raw Data from HMIS and the Point in Time Count that needs to be transformed into reports.
- Each of our reports offer us a targeted view of the data and provide information to us based on the time frame and reporting group we select (for example: Who was served in all of the Emergency Shelter programs since the beginning of the year).
- We the have to translate the data from the reports into an accessible, easy to use dashboard that supports the conversations the Funding and Performance Subcommittee wants to have with partners.



Current Status

- Investigating how to best use the “raw data”
- Collating available reports from HMIS
- Defining what the numbers mean in the reports
- Identifying the most streamlined way to create monthly reports for a dashboard

Audience for the Dashboards:

The FPS committee members identified key people to engage with the dashboards are regional committees and local partners. BoS members are always working to engage people and get them involved. Dashboards would help:

- Show how people who are not funded by HUD have a role to play
- Show progress
- Help orient new people to work underway
- Help target resources

Critical Step - Plan for Training:

When dashboards are released, training will need to take place so that people are able to effectively use and analyze the dashboards.



