Homelessness Pulse Report

First Quarter, 2011

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Community Planning and Development

Introduction to the Homelessness Pulse Report

First Quarter, 2011

The Homelessness Pulse project is designed to help the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gain a better understanding of how sheltered homelessness is changing over time. At present, the data on sheltered homelessness reported to HUD—whether through the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) or through the homeless services funding process—are collected annually. These data are comprehensive and can inform both public policy and local plans to end homelessness, but they do not capture "real time" changes in sheltered homelessness.

In an effort to collect and disseminate data more frequently, HUD has partnered with Continuums of Care (CoCs) nationwide to collect data on a quarterly basis and provide an early indication—a "pulse"—of how sheltered homelessness is changing in these communities. Appendix A provides a list of the CoCs that participated in the current Pulse report. The up-to-date information reported in the Homelessness Pulse report will help HUD respond to events that may impinge on homelessness trends nationwide. The Pulse report also helps HUD monitor progress against the 2010 Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

The Q1 2011 report uses information from 23 Continuums of Care that voluntarily submit data on sheltered homelessness in their communities, representing 361 counties and 422 cities.[1] Many of the original communities were specifically selected for participation because they had a history of successful participation in the AHAR. In future Pulse reports, communities can volunteer to participate as long as they have good HMIS-data quality. The number of participating communities has increased considerably from previous reports and is expected to grow with each passing report. Nonetheless, the report does not provide a nationally representative picture of homelessness and thus its contents should be taken as suggestive—not definitive—of how homelessness may be changing.

Main Findings: Q1 2011 Report

Participation in the Pulse Project has increased considerably. The Q1 2011 report includes estimates of sheltered homelessness from 23 Continuums of Care (CoC) nationwide, and the number of communities participating in future reports is expected to grow. With each passing report, the nation has a more comprehensive gauge—a "pulse"—of how trends in sheltered homeless are changing.

Quarterly Point-in-Time Estimates

Three-month trend

Sheltered homelessness increased in 75 percent (15 out of 20) of the CoCs, driven mainly by increases in individual homelessness that occurred in 85 percent of participating CoCs. These increases are consistent with seasonal fluctuations in shelter use that have been described in the AHAR.

Ten-month trend

Three out of the four CoCs with data over the past five quarters experienced an increase in sheltered homelessness. Changes in homelessness among each of the four CoCs were relatively large; each CoC experienced a change of at least 5 percent and three experienced a change of greater than 10 percent.

Trends by Geography:

The 3-month trends suggest that overall, individual, and family sheltered homelessness is increasing in the majority of CoCs in all three geographic types, although increases are most heavily concentrated among suburban CoCs. Among the four CoCs with 10-month trend data, the urban and suburban CoCs experienced a decline in homelessness, while the rural CoC experienced an increase.

Quarterly Estimates of Newly Sheltered Homeless

Slightly more than half of CoCs (55 percent) with 3-month trend data experienced an overall decline in newly sheltered homelessness between Q4 2010 and Q1 2011. Among the four CoCs with 12-month trend data, half experienced an increase in new client homelessness.

In This Report

Section 1 presents the quarterly Point-in-Time (PIT) counts of sheltered homelessness for the participating communities. The PIT counts show the total number of sheltered persons on a single night during the quarter.

The section also compares the most recent quarterly PIT estimate to previous estimates to gauge whether sheltered homelessness has changed. As described in the Q4 2010 report, the dates associated with the quarterly PIT estimates were changed to align with the dates in the AHAR. As a result of this change, the trend periods will change with each successive report until four, 3-month intervals (or quarters) are re-established in the Q4 2011 report.

The Q1 2011 report provides three trend periods: 3-, 6-, and 10-month trends.[2] Exhibit 1a shows the three trend periods and associated dates for the PIT counts. The report focuses on

Exhibit 1a: Range of Dates for the Quarterly PIT Count of Sheltered Homeless People

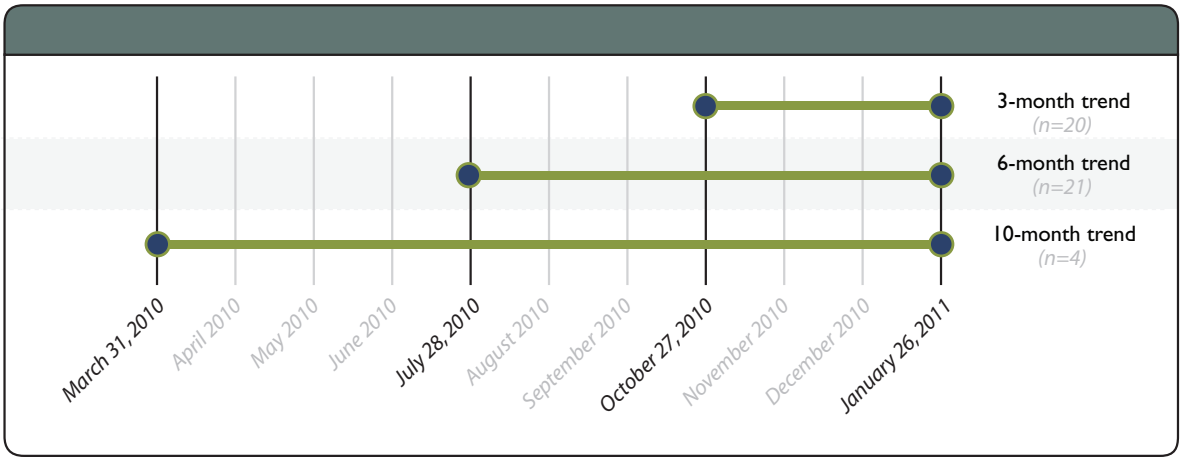
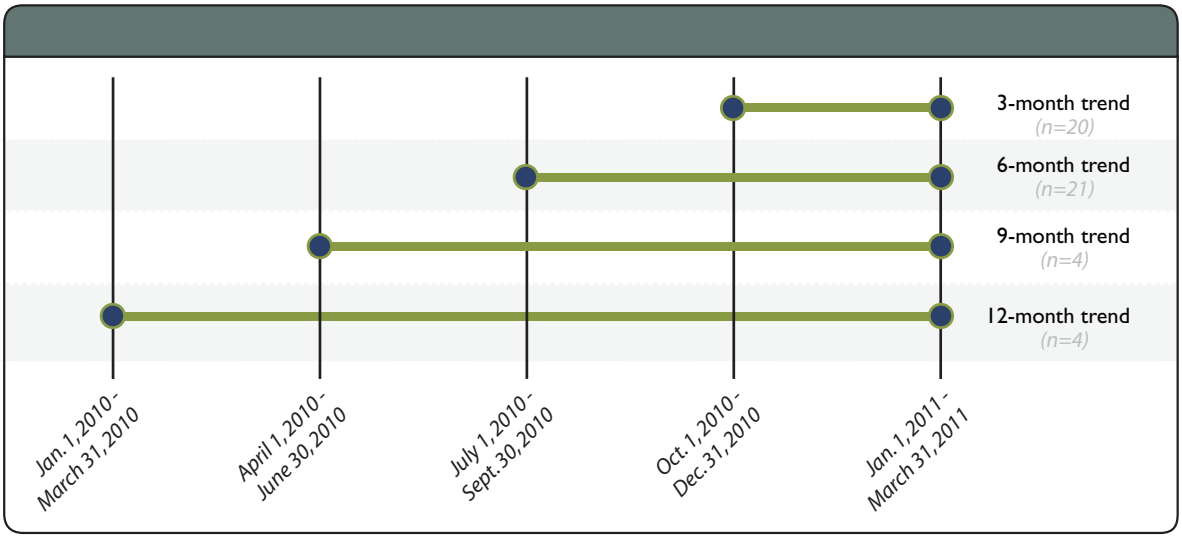


Exhibit 1b: Range of Dates for the Count of Newly Sheltered Homeless People



the latest 3-month trend, as the 3-month trends provide an immediate indication of whether homelessness is increasing or decreasing since the last quarter. Changes in 3-month trends may reflect the seasonality of shelter use—i.e., increases in shelter use during the winter and declines during the summer. The report also describes 6- and 10-month trends as they provide a longer timeframe for assessing changes in homelessness. The 10-month changes are particularly useful because these estimates essentially account for the seasonality in shelter use. The number of communities reporting the 3- and 6- month trends is larger than the number of communities in earlier quarters because participation in the Pulse project has expanded.

Section 2 presents the counts of persons who were not previously homeless but became "newly" sheltered at any point throughout the quarter. The section also describes the prior living arrangements of newly sheltered people.

The changes made to the quarterly PIT counts of all sheltered people are not carried through to the estimates of newly sheltered homeless people. Exhibit 1b shows the three trend periods and associated dates for the counts of newly sheltered homeless people.

1. Trends in the Quarterly PIT Count of Sheltered Homelessness

Pulse communities report Point-in-Time (PIT) counts of persons in emergency shelters and transitional housing separately for persons experiencing homelessness by themselves and as members of families.[3] The count was generated through each CoC's HMIS and was adjusted statistically to account for residential service providers that do not participate in the community's HMIS.[4] The adjustment results in an estimate of all sheltered homeless persons in each community on the date of the PIT count.

The Q1 2011 PIT counts—conducted on January 26, 2010—are compared with previous counts to describe both the percentage of communities experiencing net changes in sheltered homelessness and the size of the change. A net increase (or decrease) in sheltered homelessness indicates that the number of sheltered homeless persons increased (or decreased) between the two quarterly PIT counts, though some fluctuation may have occurred in-between the two dates. (Appendix B shows the quarterly PIT counts for each CoC, and Appendix C displays the percentage change across the multiple trend periods.)

Changes in Quarterly PIT Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness

Exhibits 2, 3, and 4 show: (1) the percentage of CoCs that experienced net increases and decreases in sheltered homelessness during the 3-, 6-, and 10-month time periods; and (2) the magnitude of the change by household type. In these exhibits, each block represents a CoC.

Three-Month Trend in Sheltered Homelessness

- Sheltered homelessness increased in 75 percent (15 of 20) of the CoCs between the last Wednesday in October and the last Wednesday in January. Similar to the three month trend reported in Q4 2010, this trend was driven mostly by the increase in individual homelessness that occurred in 85 percent of the CoCs. Among persons in families, slightly more than half (55 percent) of CoCs experienced an increase. These increases are consistent with seasonal fluctuations in shelter use, whereby people living on the streets or other unsheltered locations seek shelter due to cold or weather.

- The magnitude of change during the 3-month period was larger among CoCs that experienced an increase in sheltered homelessness than for those experiencing a decrease. Among CoCs experiencing a net increase, 53 percent (8 of 15) experienced an increase of more than 10 percent. Sixty percent of decreases in overall homelessness were slight (2 percent or less). However, within family homelessness, almost half (44 percent) of sites with a decrease in family homelessness experienced a decline of greater than 10 percent.

Ten-Month Trend in Sheltered Homelessness

- Three of the four CoCs that participated over the past four quarters experienced a net increase in homelessness between March 31, 2010 and January 26, 2011. The change by household type varied slightly, with three of four CoCs experiencing an increase in family homelessness, and two of four experiencing increases among individuals.

- Three of four CoCs experienced a change of greater than 10 percent, and the remaining CoC witnessed an increase between 5 and 10 percent.

Sheltered homelessness has increased in seventy-five percent of communities, which occurred across both the three- and ten-month trend periods.

Changes in Quarterly PIT Estimates of Sheltered Homelessness by Geography

Communities participating in the Pulse project are classified into three geographic types (see Exhibit 5):

1. *Principal city CoCs* are communities where the majority of the CoC's population lives within a principal city.
2. *Suburban CoCs* are communities where fewer than 50 percent of residents live within a principal city, but more than 70 percent of residents live within a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).
3. *Rural CoCs* are communities where at least 30 percent of residents within the CoC live outside of an MSA.

The 3-month trends suggest that overall, individual, and family sheltered homelessness has increased in the majority of CoCs located in all three geographic types, although increases are most heavily concentrated among suburban CoCs. During the 10-month time period, homelessness increased in the urban and suburban CoCs, but decreased in the rural CoC.

Principal City CoCs

★ *Three-month trend:* Four communities with 3-month trend data were classified as principal city CoCs. All four of these CoCs experienced an increase in individual homelessness, and three of four experienced an increase in family and overall homelessness.

★ *Ten-month trend:* One community with 10-month trend data was classified as a principal city CoC. This CoC experienced an increase in overall homelessness despite a decline in individual homelessness.

Suburban CoCs

★ *Three-month trend:* Eleven communities with 3-month trend data were categorized as suburban CoCs. Most suburban CoCs experienced an increase in sheltered homelessness overall (82 percent) and individual homelessness (91 percent), but a decrease in family homelessness (55 percent).

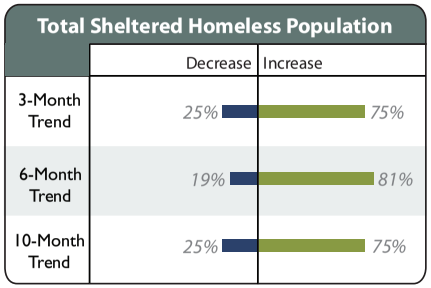
★ *Ten-month trend:* Two communities with 10-month trend data were categorized as suburban CoCs. Both CoCs witnessed an increase in homelessness among individuals and among families.

Rural CoCs

★ *Three-month trend:* Five communities with 3-month trend data were classified as rural. Three of five rural CoCs experienced an increase in individual and family homelessness, while the remaining two witnessed a decline in the count of both household types.

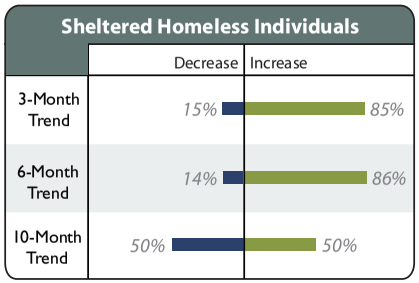
★ *Ten-month trend:* The one rural CoC with 10-month trend data experienced a decline in homelessness.

Exhibit 2: Percentage of Pulse Communities Experiencing Net Changes in Total Sheltered Homeless Population*



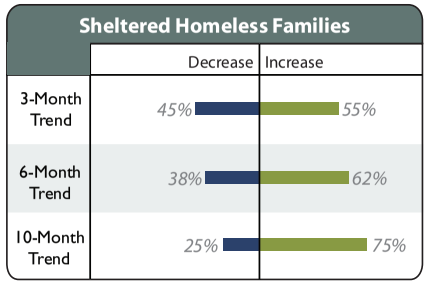
	Decreases				Increases			
	-10.1% or greater	-5.1% to -10%	-2.1% to -5%	<0% to -2%	0% to 2%	2.1% to 5%	5.1% to 10%	10.1% or greater
3-month trend	5%	5%		15%	10%	5%	20%	40%
6-month trend	14%			5%	10%	5%	14%	52%
10-month trend	25%						25%	50%

Exhibit 3: Percentage of Pulse Communities Experiencing Net Changes in Sheltered Homeless Individuals*



	Decreases				Increases			
	-10.1% or greater	-5.1% to -10%	-2.1% to -5%	<0% to -2%	0% to 2%	2.1% to 5%	5.1% to 10%	10.1% or greater
3-month trend	5%	5%		5%	5%	10%	15%	55%
6-month trend	5%	5%	5%		5%		24%	57%
10-month trend	25%		25%					50%

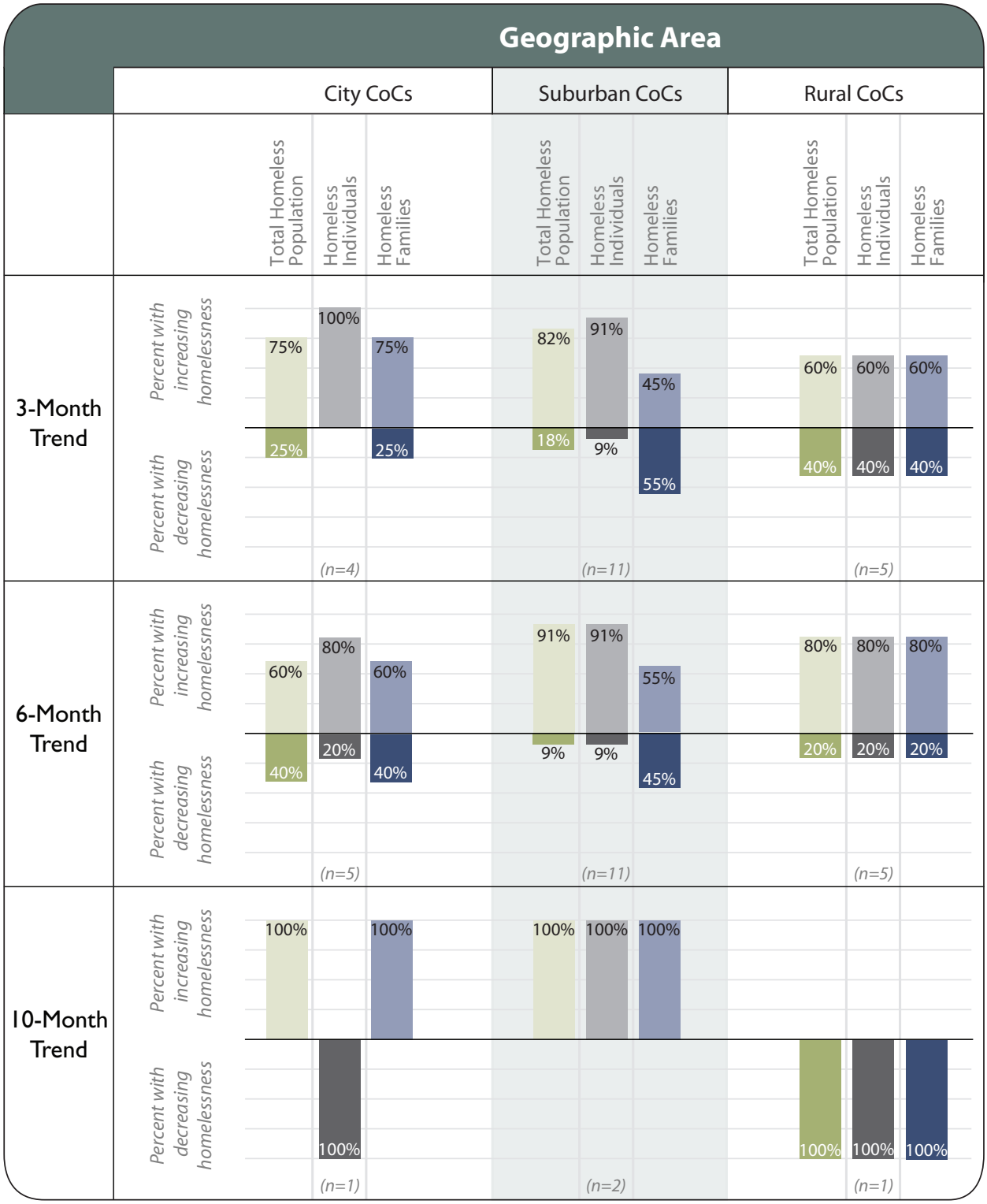
Exhibit 4: Percentage of Pulse Communities Experiencing Net Changes in Sheltered Homeless Families*



	Decreases				Increases			
	-10.1% or greater	-5.1% to -10%	-2.1% to -5%	<0% to -2%	0% to 2%	2.1% to 5%	5.1% to 10%	10.1% or greater
3-month trend	20%	10%	10%	5%	5%		15%	35%
6-month trend	24%		10%	5%	5%		19%	38%
10-month trend	25%					25%		50%

*Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Exhibit 5: Percentage of Pulse Communities Experiencing Changes in Sheltered Homeless by Geography and Household Type



2. Estimates of Newly Sheltered Homeless Persons

A newly sheltered homeless person is someone who:

- Used an emergency shelter or transitional housing program during the quarter; and
- Had not received any residential homeless services in the 15 months prior to entering shelter.[5]

These data provide an indication of how many individuals and persons in families experienced sheltered homelessness for the first time during the quarter. Over time, this information may suggest whether homelessness prevention programs are effectively stemming the flow of persons into the shelter system and diverting persons at-risk of becoming homeless into stable living situations.

Trends in newly sheltered homelessness were not affected by the shifts in the dates associated with the quarterly PIT counts. Instead, the trends in this section are based on changes between the four annual quarters. This section provides three types of trend estimates:

1. CoCs that experienced net changes in newly sheltered homelessness over the past four quarters, by household type;
2. Changes in the household composition of newly sheltered homeless persons; and
3. Changes in the prior living situation of newly sheltered homeless persons.

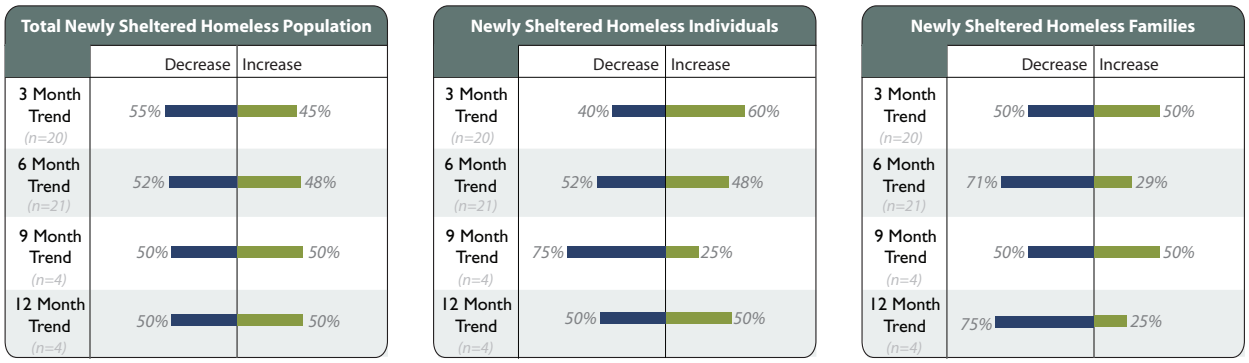
Changes in the Quarterly Estimates of Newly Sheltered Homeless Persons

Exhibit 6 presents the quarterly estimates of newly sheltered homeless persons, showing that:

★ *Three-month trend:* Slightly more than half of CoCs (55 percent) with 3-month trend data experienced an overall decline in newly sheltered homelessness between Q4 2010 and Q1 2011. The declines were often seen in only one of the two household types. When broken down by family type, only half of the 20 CoCs experienced a decline among newly homeless families and 40 percent experienced a decline among newly homeless individuals.

★ *Twelve-month trend:* Two of the four CoCs with 12-month trend data experienced a decline in newly sheltered homelessness overall.

Exhibit 6: Percentage of Communities Experiencing Net Changes in Newly Sheltered Homelessness by Household Type



Household Type and Composition of Newly Sheltered Homeless Persons

Household type and composition are based on the household's status on the first day of entry into the shelter system. Because some communities participating in the Pulse project are much larger than others and thus would heavily influence the aggregated results, the data presented in the exhibit are an average of the percentages for each community. For example, if individual persons represent 50, 60, 70, and 80 percent of the newly sheltered population in four communities, the average is equal to 65 percent. This report includes information on 23 communities for Q1 2010, 21 communities for Q4 2010, 25 communities for Q3 2010, and 7 communities for the prior quarters. The results are presented in Exhibits 7 and 8.

- *Three-month trend:* The proportion of newly sheltered persons in families decreased over the past quarter by two percent, to 32 percent of the newly sheltered homeless population. In Q1 2011, individuals represented 68 percent of newly sheltered homeless persons.

Among newly sheltered individuals in Q1 2011, slightly more than two thirds (68 percent) were men, a slight decline of 1 percentage point from Q4 2010. Women made up 28 percent of the individual population, which is the same as the prior quarter. The remaining 4 percent in Q1 were unaccompanied youth (including parenting youth), an increase of less than 1 percentage point. The composition of newly sheltered families remained stable during the 3-month period, with children making up slightly under two-thirds of people in families.

- *Twelve-month trend:* The proportion of newly sheltered persons who are in families in Q1 2011 was the same as Q1 2010; individuals made up 68 percent and persons in families made up 32 percent of the newly homeless client population.

Exhibit 7: Household Type of Newly Sheltered Persons*

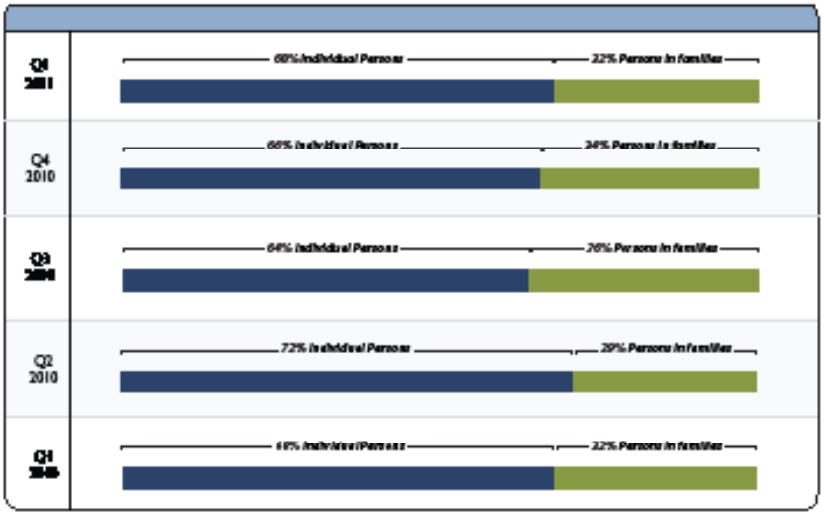


Exhibit 8: Household Composition of Newly Sheltered Persons by Household Type*

*Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

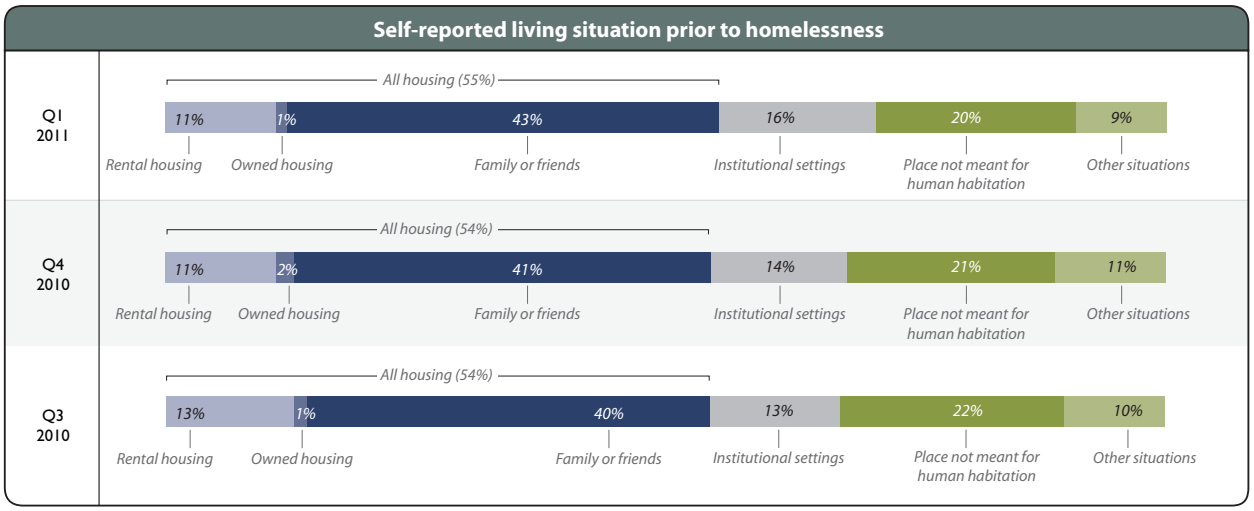
Similar to the three-month trend, the composition of families remained relatively unchanged during the 12-month period. However, among individuals, the proportion of individual adult men declined from 75 to 68 percent, while the proportion of individual adult women increased by 5 percentage points and the proportion of unaccompanied youth increased by one percentage point.

Prior Living Situation of Newly Sheltered Homeless Persons

Communities participating in the Pulse project reported on the living situation of persons just prior to entering the shelter system (Exhibit 9). The various housing situations are grouped into four categories:

1. "Housing"—This category accounts for people who were in an owned housing unit, a rental unit, or staying with family or friends. It also includes a very small proportion of people in permanent supportive housing.
2. Institutional Settings—This category includes people who were in several different types of institutional facilities: psychiatric facilities, substance abuse centers, hospitals, jails, prisons, juvenile detention centers, and foster care.
3. Place not meant for human habitation—This category includes people who were living on the streets, in cars, in abandoned buildings, or other locations not intended for habitation. People in this category are counted as newly *sheltered* homeless because they have not used the shelter system in the 15 months prior to program entry.
4. Other—This category captures people who were in a hotel, motel, or other type of living arrangement.

Exhibit 9: Prior Living Situation of Newly Sheltered Homeless Persons by Household Type*



*Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Slightly more than half of newly sheltered homeless persons (54 percent) came from a housed situation. Of these, 76 percent came from staying with family or friends. Few newly homeless persons came directly from an apartment or house that they owned (2 percent). One in 7 newly homeless clients (14 percent) came from institutional settings, and the remaining 32 percent came from other types of situations, mostly from a place not meant for human habitation. The prior living situation of newly homeless people remained relatively stable between Q3 and Q4; all changes were within 2 percentage points.

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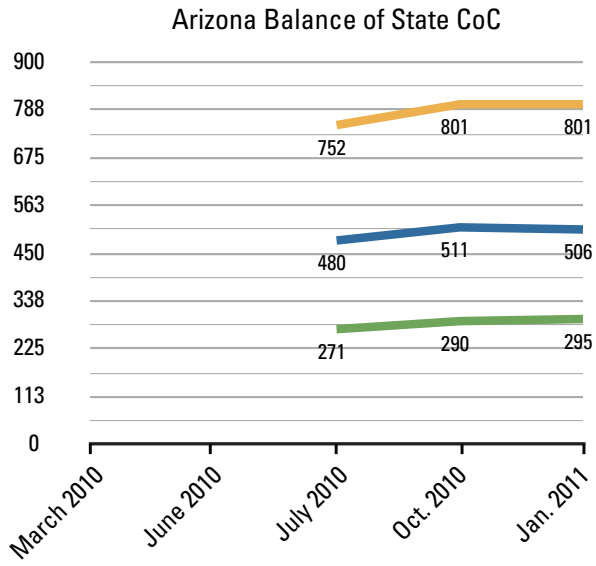
1. Cities are defined as places with 10,000 or more people.
2. The estimate from Q2 2010, which was conducted on June 30, 2010, was omitted from this report because there was only one month between the Q2 end-of-the-quarter PIT count to the Q3 seasonal midpoint PIT count.
3. In the Pulse project, a family is a household composed of at least one adult (age 18 or older) and one child (age 17 or younger). This definition is consistent with the AHAR. An unaccompanied person under the age of 18 is an individual. Parenting youth and their children are counted as individuals, not as a family, because an adult is not present.
4. The Pulse project uses the AHAR methodology for adjusting the PIT estimates to account for service providers that do not participate in the respective community's HMIS. See Appendix B in the 2009 AHAR for a detailed explanation of the methodology.
5. Although the majority of service providers participate in HMIS nationwide, some providers (especially faith-based providers) may not participate in their community's HMIS. As a result, it is possible for a person to be considered "new" even though he or she received residential services within the past 15 months if the person used a service provider that does not participate in HMIS or was served in shelter outside of the CoC. In the Q1 2011 report, 10 percent of newly homeless clients self-reported that their prior living arrangement was an emergency shelter or transitional housing program even though the community's HMIS did not have a record for them. The report removes these from the counts of newly sheltered homeless persons.

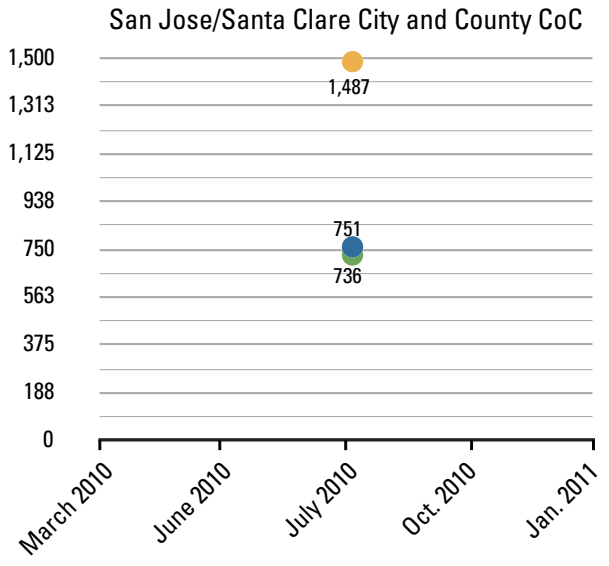
Appendix A

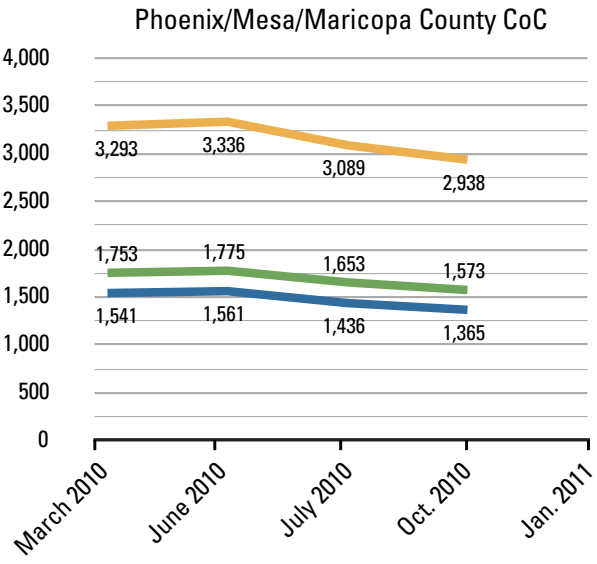
CoCs Participating in the Q1 2011 Pulse Report

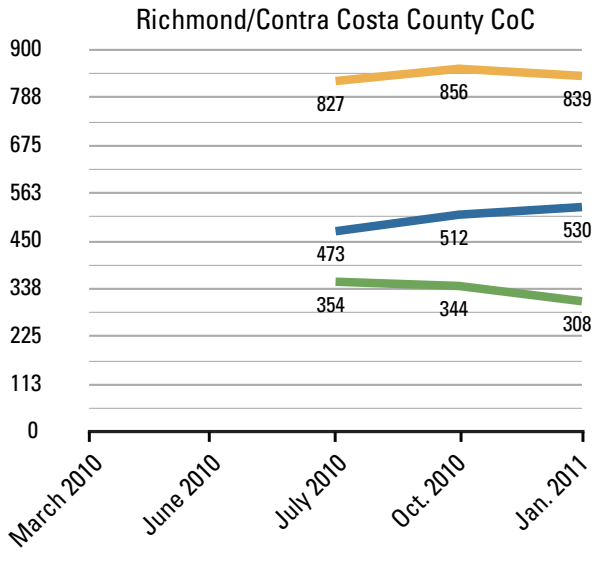
CoC	CoC Full Name	U.S. Census Region	Geography Category	Usable data for Q1, 2010	Usable data for Q2, 2010	Usable data for Q3, 2010	Usable data for Q4, 2010	Usable data for Q1, 2011
AZ-500	Arizona Balance of State CoC	West	Rural			●	●	●
AZ-502	Phoenix/Mesa/Maricopa County Regional CoC	West	Principal City	●	●	●	●	
CA-500	San Jose/Santa Clara City & County CoC	West	Principal City			●		
CA-505	Richmond/Contra Costa County CoC	West	Suburban			●	●	●
CA-609	San Bernardino City & County CoC	West	Suburban			●	●	●
CT-510	Bristol CoC	Northeast	Suburban			●		
DC-500	District of Columbia CoC	South	Principal City	●	●	●	●	●
GA-506	Marietta/Cobb County CoC	South	Suburban			●	●	●
GA-507	Savannah/Chatham County CoC	South	Principal City					●
IA-501	Iowa Balance of State CoC	Midwest	Rural			●	●	●
IA-502	Des Moines/Polk County CoC	Midwest	Principal City			●	●	●
ID-501	Idaho Balance of State CoC	West	Rural			●	●	●
IL-511	Cook County CoC	Midwest	Suburban					●
KY-500	Kentucky Balance of State CoC	South	Rural	●	●	●	●	●
LA-502	Shreveport/Bossier/Northwest CoC	South	Suburban	●	●			
MD-600	Prince George's County CoC	South	Suburban			●	●	●
MD-601	Montgomery County CoC	South	Suburban			●	●	●
MI-501	Detroit CoC	Midwest	Principal City			●		●
MI-504	Pontiac/Royal Oak/Oakland County CoC	Midwest	Suburban			●		
MI-508	Lansing/East Lansing/Ingham County CoC	Midwest	Principal City			●	●	●
MI-519	Holland/Ottawa County CoC	Midwest	Suburban			●	●	●
NY-600	New York City CoC	Northeast	Principal City	●	●			
OH-500	Cincinnati/Hamilton County CoC	Midwest	Suburban			●	●	●
OH-502	Cleveland/Cuyahoga County CoC	Midwest	Suburban	●	●	●	●	●
VA-500	Richmond/Henrico, Chesterfield, Hanover Counties CoC	South	Suburban	●	●	●	●	●
WI-500	Wisconsin Balance of State CoC	Midwest	Rural			●	●	●
WI-501	Milwaukee City & County CoC	Midwest	Principal City			●	●	●
WI-502	Racine City & County CoC	Midwest	Suburban			●	●	●
WI-503	Madison/Dane County CoC	Midwest	Suburban			●	●	●

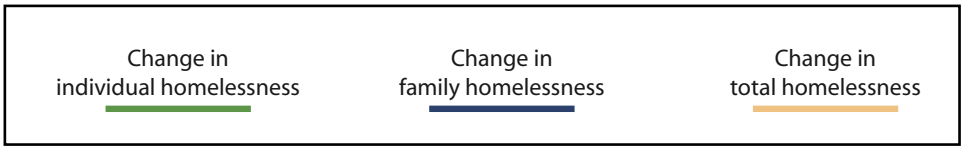
Appendix B: Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC



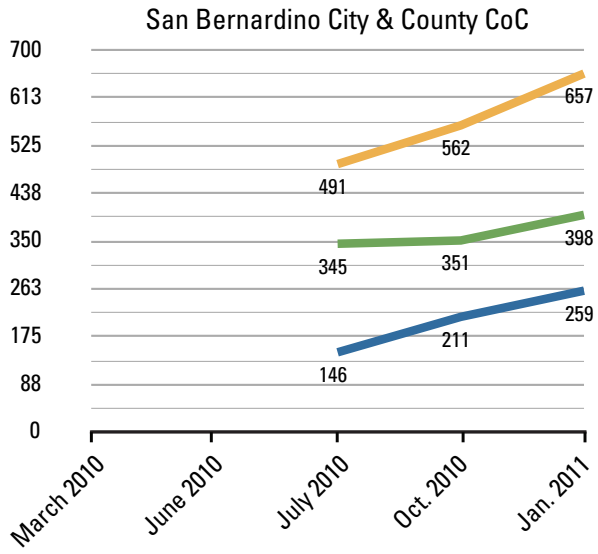


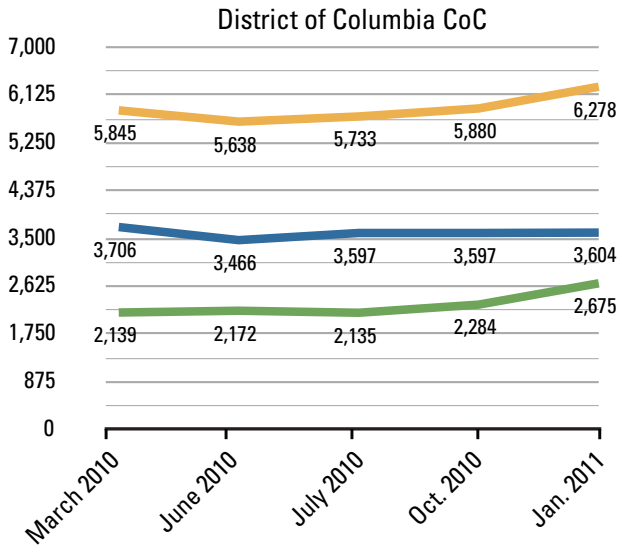


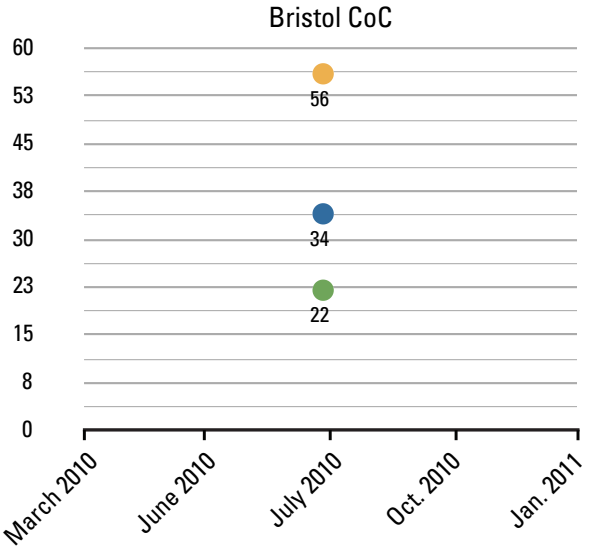


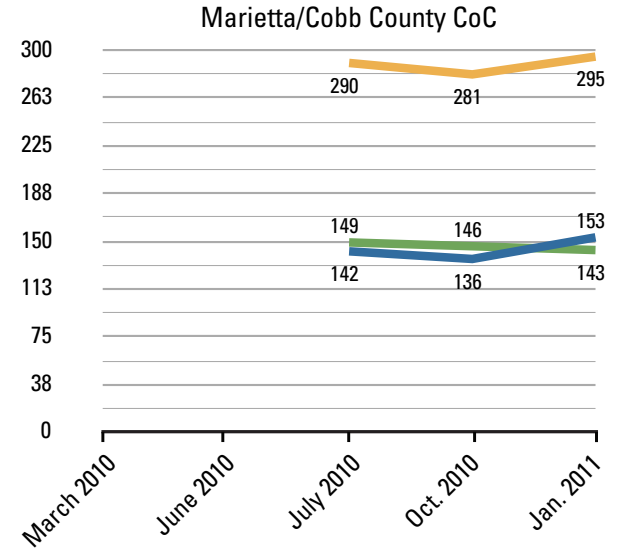


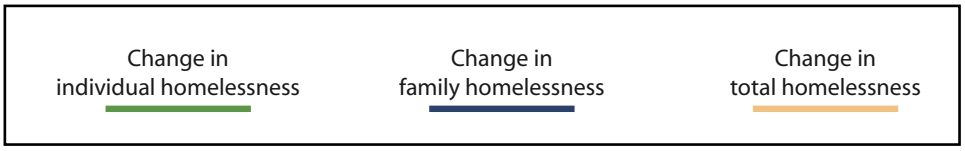
Appendix B: Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC



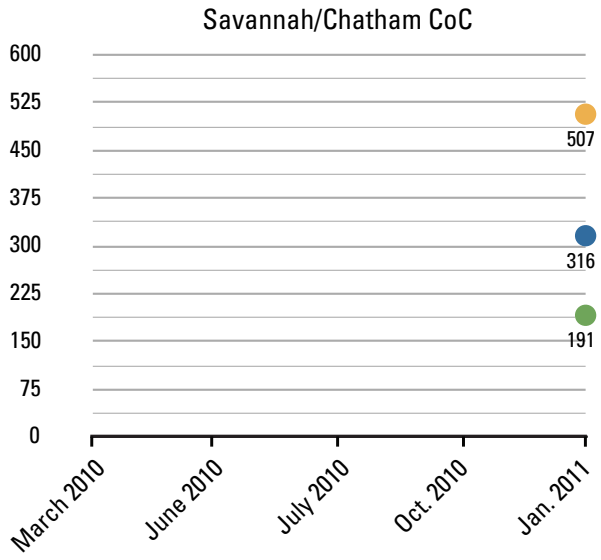


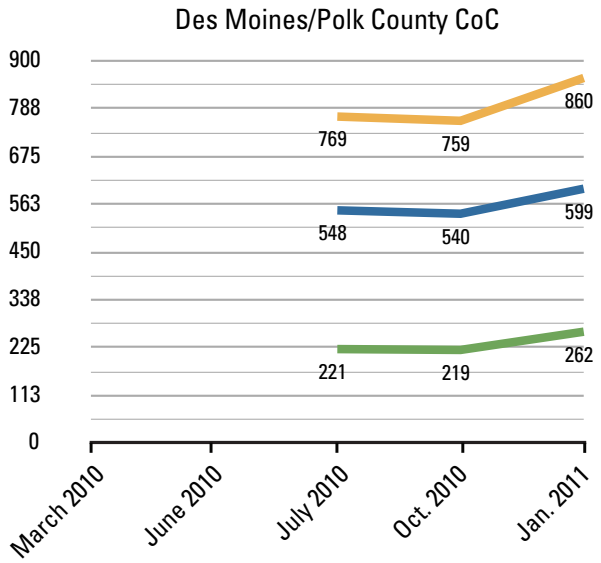


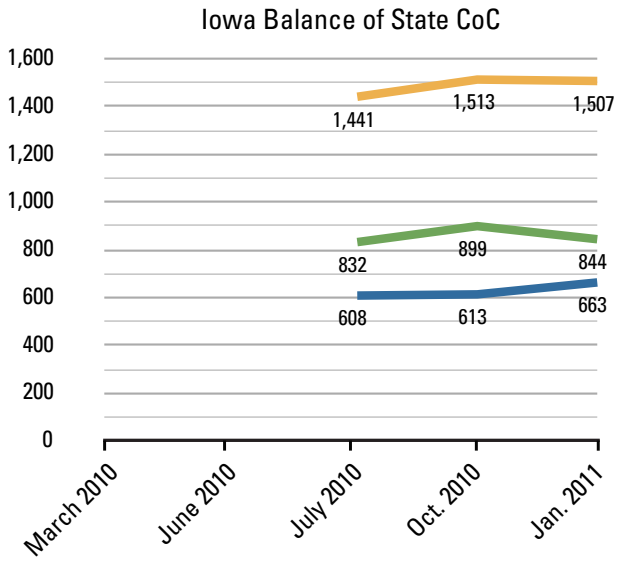


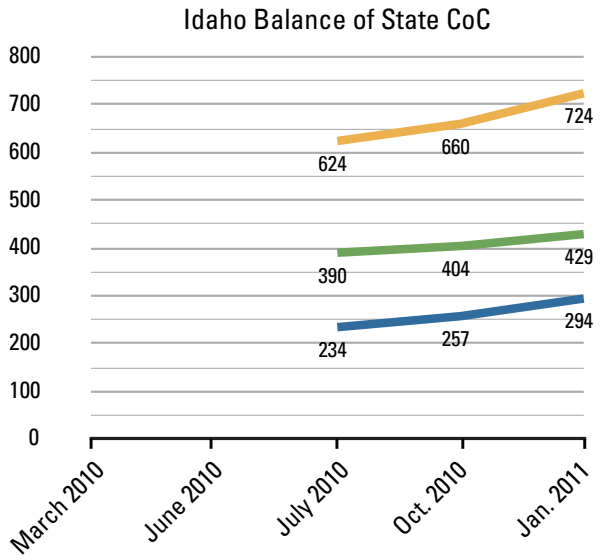


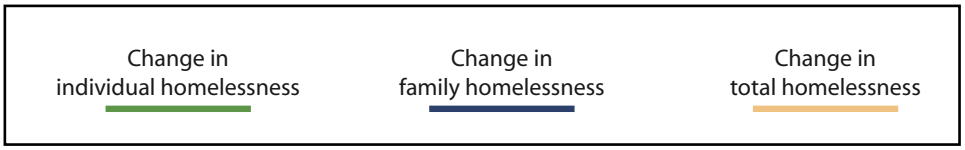
Appendix B: Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC



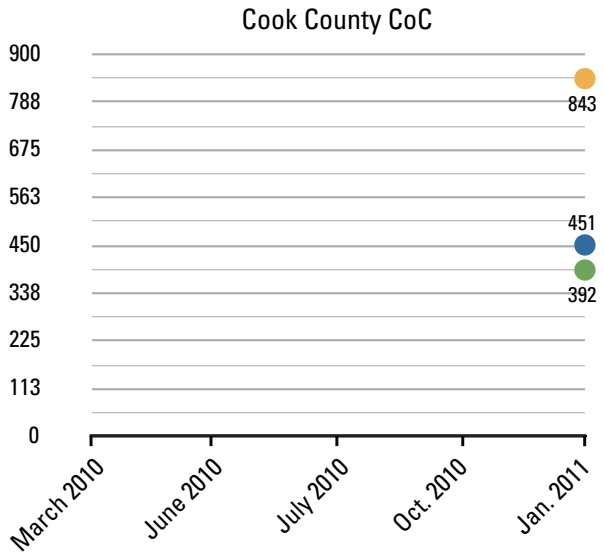


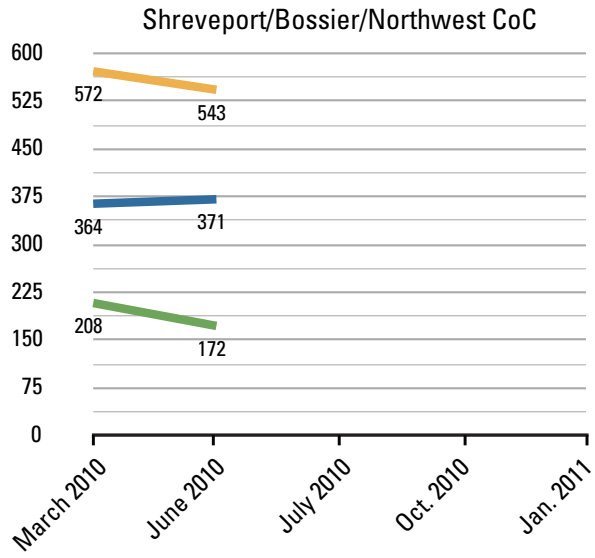


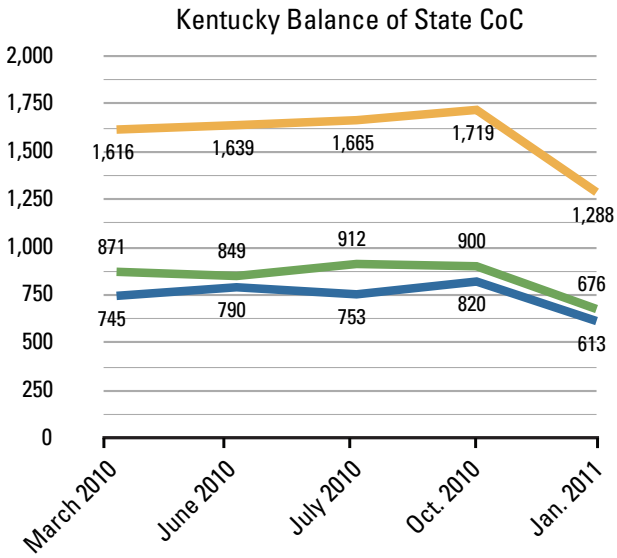


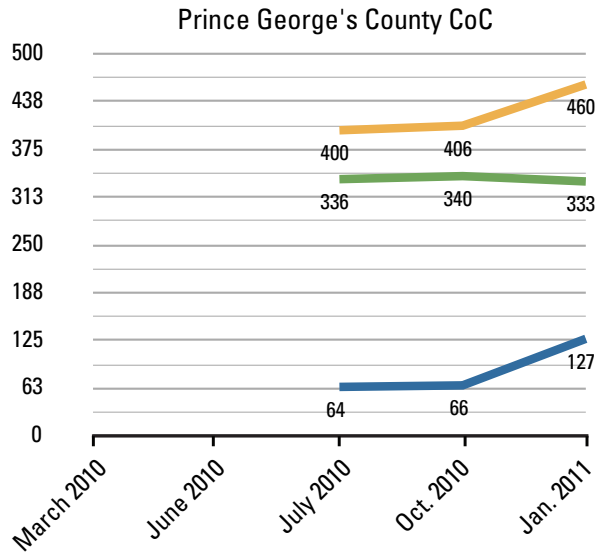


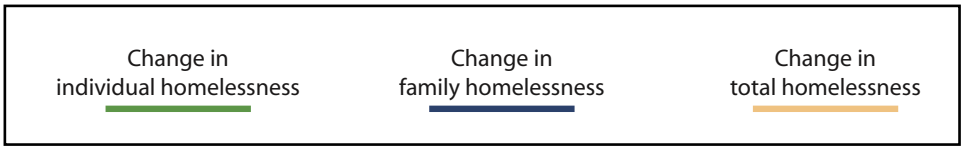
Appendix B: Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC



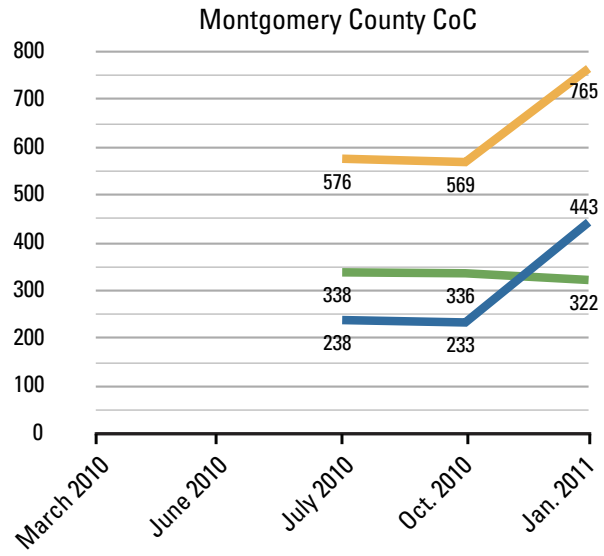


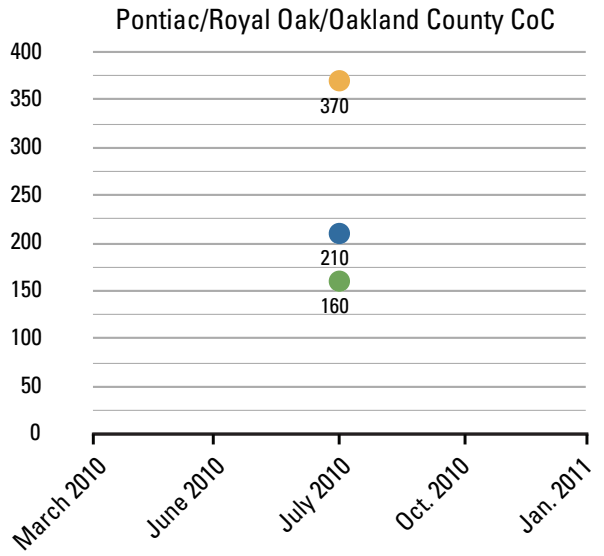


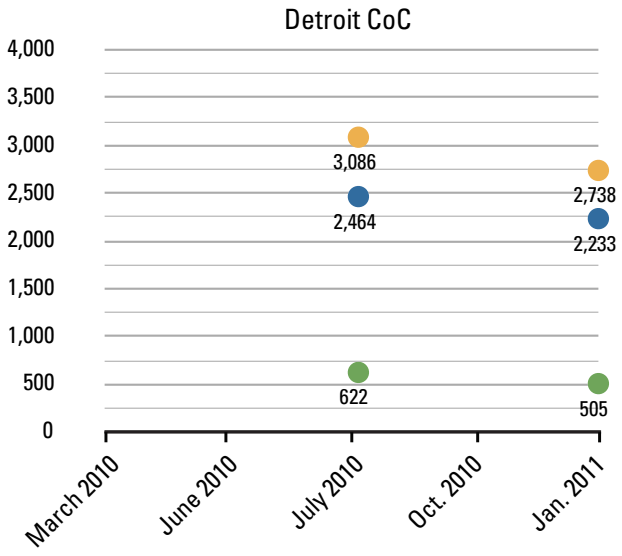


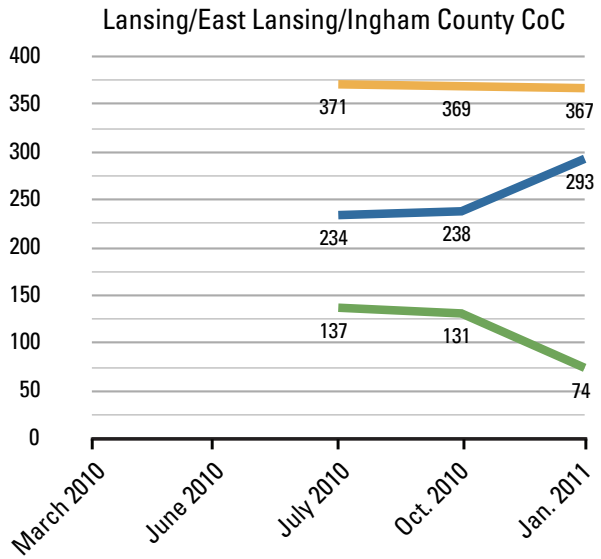


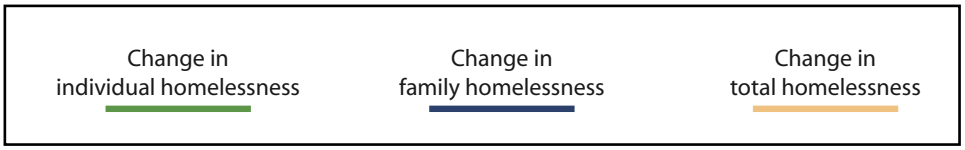
Appendix B: Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC



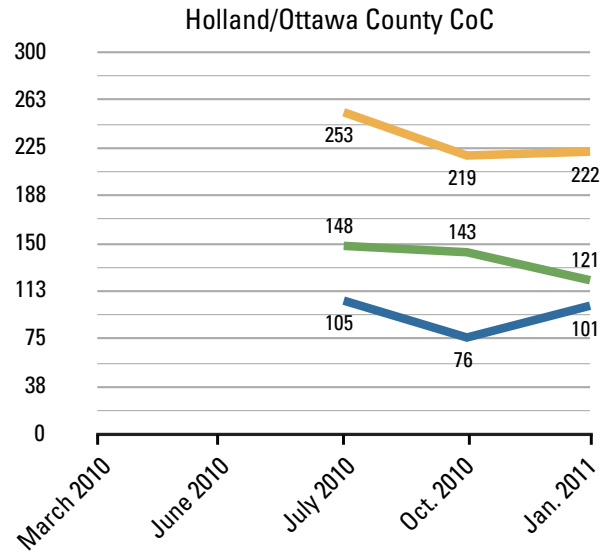


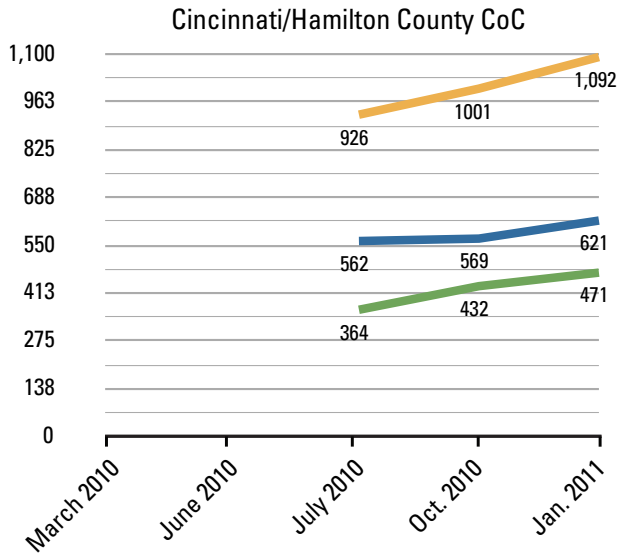


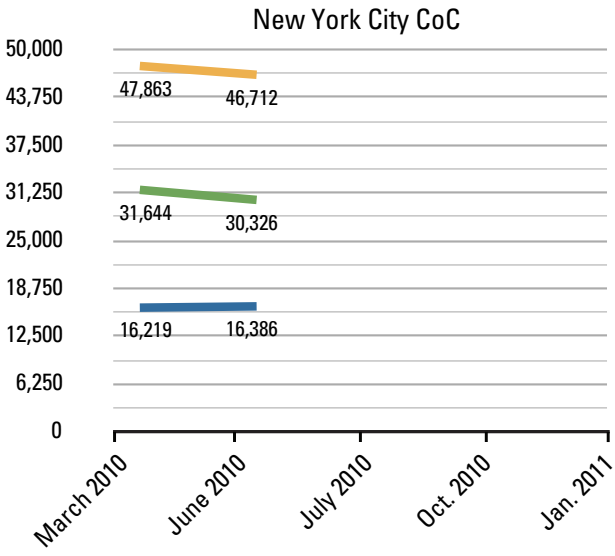


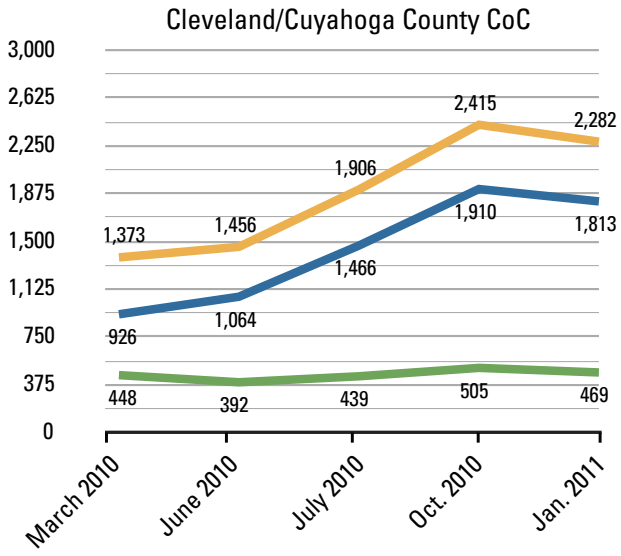


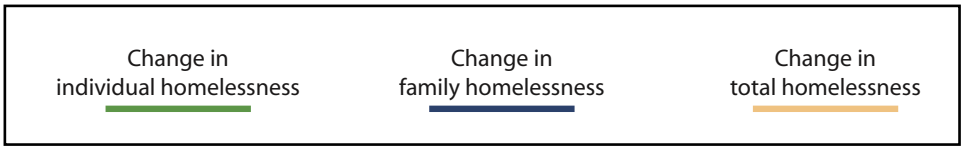
Appendix B: Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC



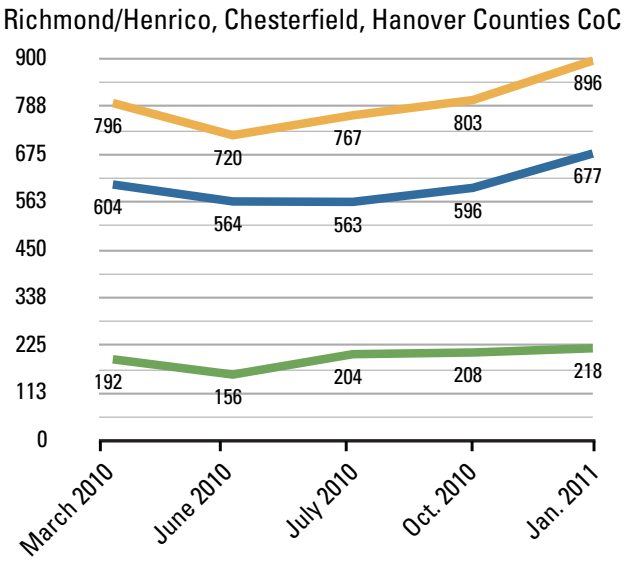


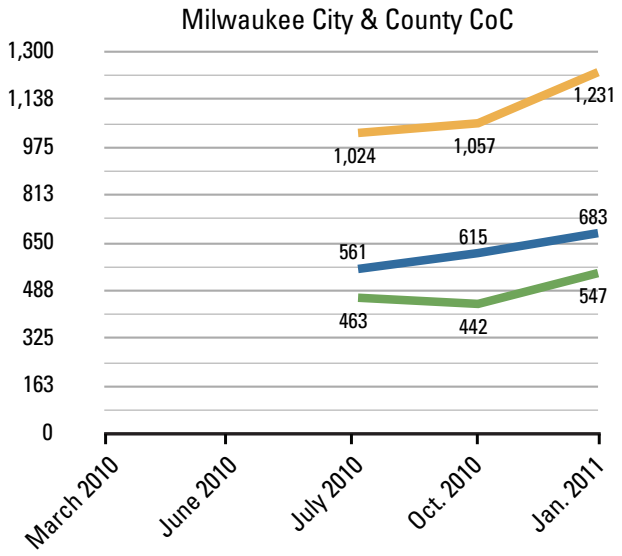


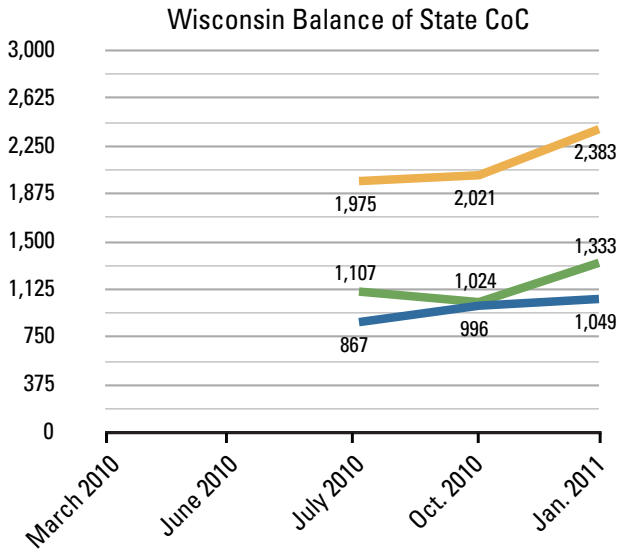


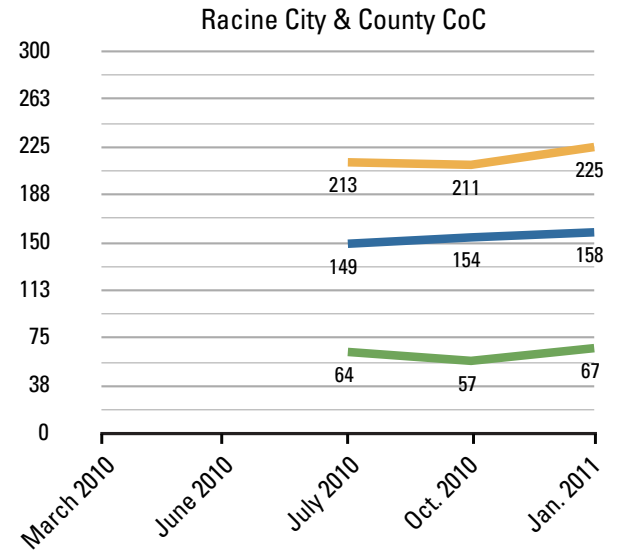


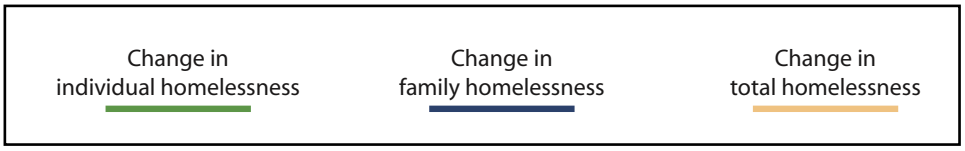
Appendix B: Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC











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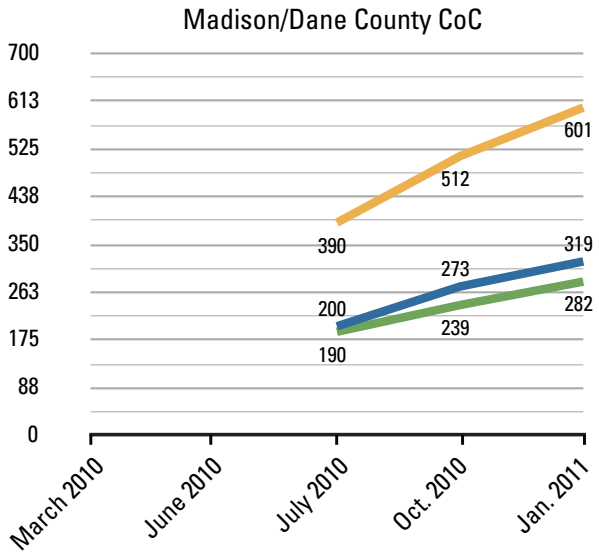
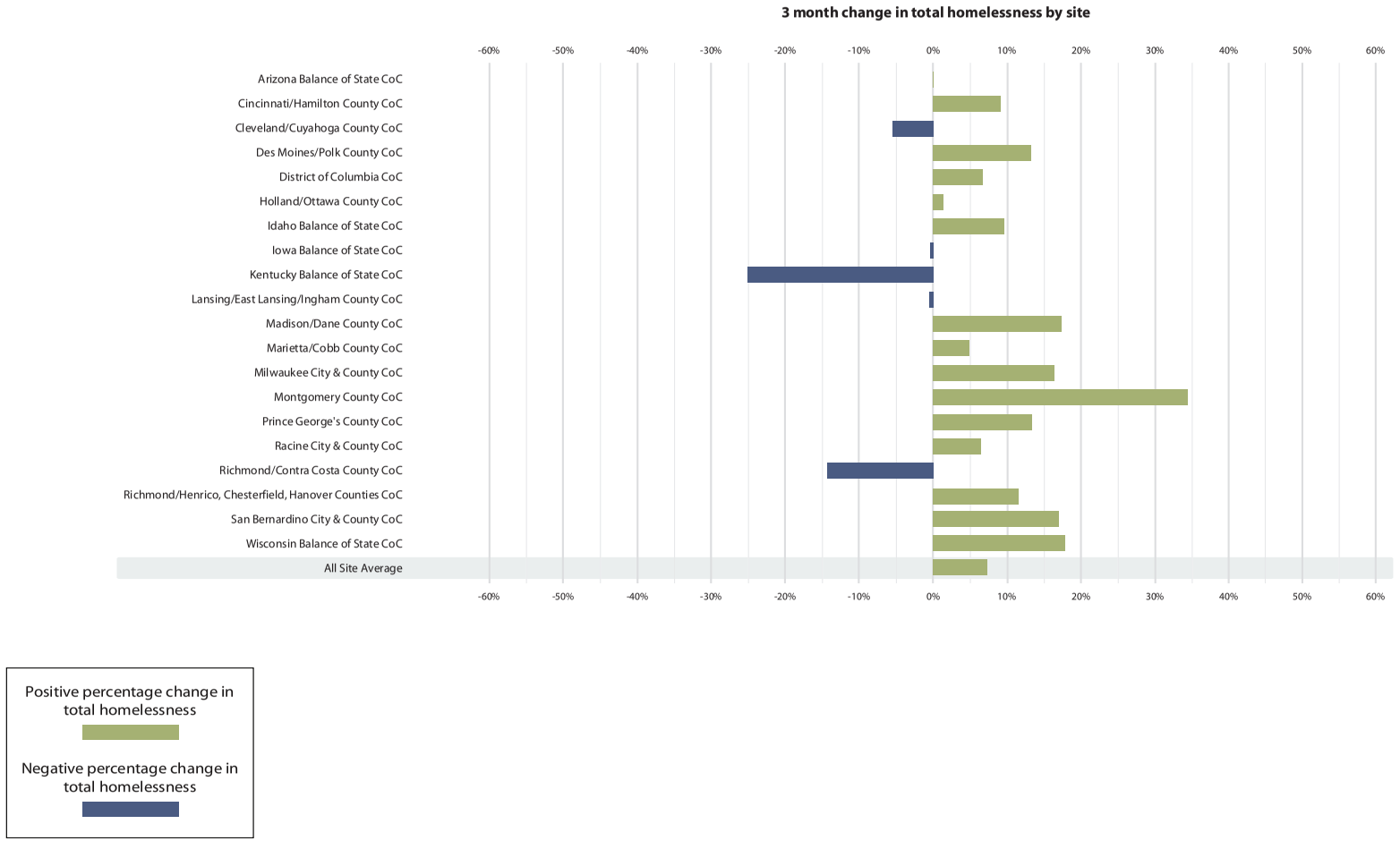


Appendix C: Percentage Change in the Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC



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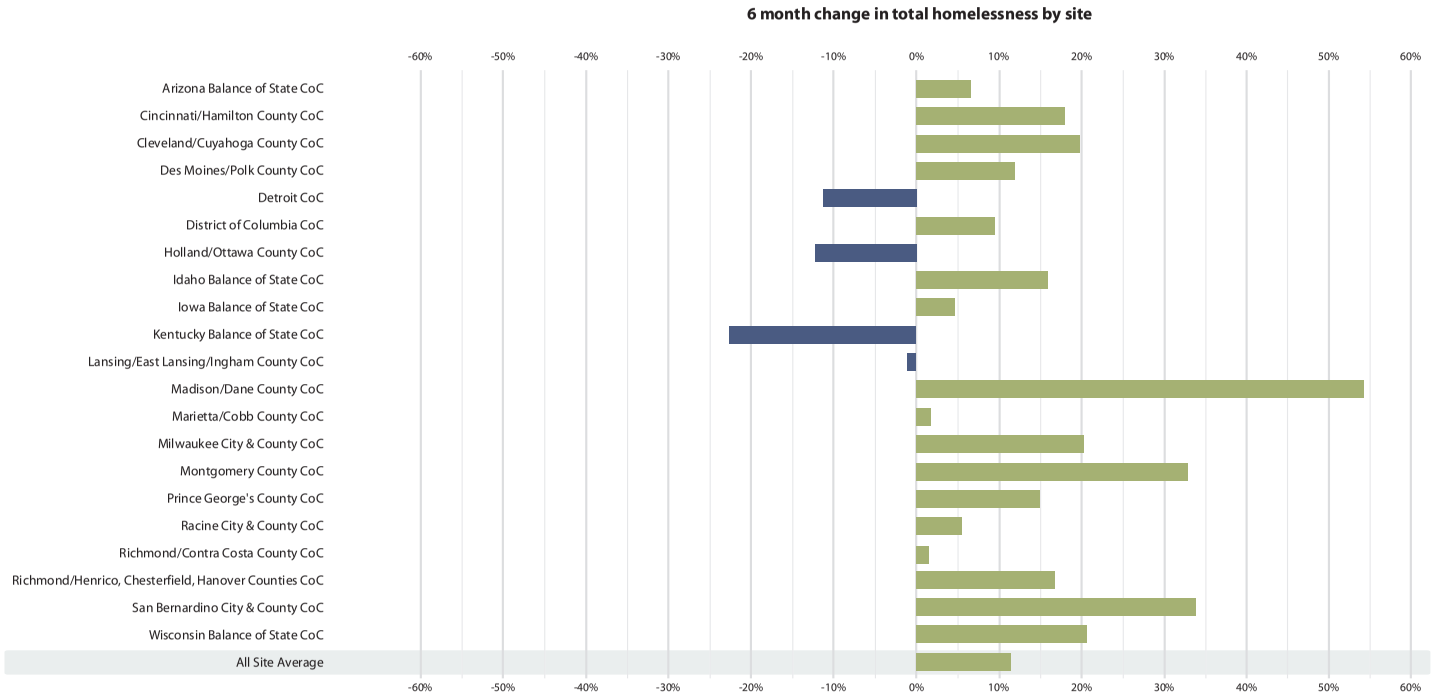

Positive percentage change in total homelessness

Negative percentage change in total homelessness

Appendix C: Percentage Change in the Quarterly PIT Counts by CoC