Atlanta Continuum of Care
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2023
Zoom Meeting ([view Zoom recording](#))

- ❖ **Welcome and Introductions – Annie Hyrila & Kayland Arrington**
- ❖ **Lead Agency Updates**
  - o **2024 CoC Meeting Updates – Brad Schweers**
    - ▪ Starting in 2024, the CoC meetings and Atlanta Governing Council meetings will be combined. The current cadence of the CoC meetings (second Tuesday of every other month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.) will remain the same. The first part of the meeting will be open to the public but will be dedicated to Governing Council business. The second part of the meeting will feature CoC updates from partner agencies and other presentations. The Governing Council approved this meeting change at their September meeting in the hopes that it will provide more transparency and accountability between the CoC and the Governing Council.
  - o **AREA Racial Equity Standards – McKenzie Wren & Brianna Flowers**
    - ▪ The Atlanta CoC recently wrapped up strategic planning efforts and has published the [Community Plan to Reduce and End Homelessness](#). Part of the plan contains goals related to strengthening cultural competencies around race, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identification. The first Culture Goal is to advance equity within the Atlanta CoC. Contributing committees to the plan and goals include the DEI Taskforce, the AREA committee, and Provider Sub-Committees.
    - ▪ CoC members can view and provide feedback on the draft framework of the racial equity standards [here](#). Standards that are being assessed are centered around administration, staff training, communications, service provision, and advocacy. Feedback should be submitted by December 1. Any questions can be submitted to [Brianna Flowers](#).
  - o **Advancement Updates – Dr. Jasmine Rockwell Heard**
    - ▪ The HUD family permanent supportive housing grant application and rapid housing site manager and supportive services grant application have been extended until December 1. All application materials can be found on the [Partners for HOME website](#). All questions can be sent to [Jasmine Rockwell Heard](#).
  - o **Youth and Family Updates – Jasmine Cunningham**
    - ▪ As part of a 12-month lookback, 146 youth have been enrolled in a permanent housing project, 89 clients have been housed, 410 have been enrolled in outreach, 101 have been enrolled in diversion, and 74 have been successfully diverted.
    - ▪ 10 families have been approved for TANF. 56 families have been successfully diverted. 83 families are enrolled in diversion. 7 families have been placed in rapid rehousing.
  - o **Fulton County Justice Impacted Project – Brianna Flowers**
    - ▪ Fulton County is launching a pilot program to bridge the gap for justice-impacted individuals who are transitioning out of incarceration. This initiative marks a crucial step in addressing the intersectionality of homelessness, criminalization, and mental health. Fulton County is looking for assistance from one or two agencies willing to receive referrals for housing navigation. Questions should be directed to [Afrika Cotton](#).
  - o **2024 Atlanta Point-in-Time Count – Abby Bracewell**
    - ▪ The Point-in-Time Count, mandated by HUD, is an annual survey of the sheltered and unsheltered population in the City of Atlanta. Besides being mandated by HUD, the Point-in-Time Count helps the

Atlanta CoC understand trends in homelessness year over year and also helps attract resources for ending homelessness. The night count takes place on the second to last Monday of January, and day site locations take place at service centers around the city the week following. Day site counts take place in order to survey any individuals who may have been missed during the night count.

- The 2024 Atlanta Point-in-Time Count is set for the week of January 22. The night count will take place on Monday the 22, and day site counts will take place during the week following the night count. Volunteer information will be sent out via the CoC newsletter and on social media once team leads and day site locations are solidified. If your agency is interested in participating as a day site count or if you would like to serve as a team lead for the night count, please contact Abby Bracewell. If your organization can provide transportation for volunteers during the night count, please reach out to Kevin Briskin.

- o **CoC End-of-Year Celebration – Abby Bracewell**
  - The second annual Atlanta CoC Sneaker Ball will be held on December 19 from 5 to 7 p.m. Awards will be given to agencies and individuals who went above and beyond over the past year. Nominations for certain awards will be solicited from the CoC via the newsletter. Attire is cocktail and kicks, so show up in your fanciest sneakers! Registration information and instructions for nominating individuals and agencies for awards will be sent out via the CoC newsletter.

- o **SOAR Overview – Denice Wade**
  - SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) is a program by SAMHSA designed to help individuals experiencing homelessness overcome the barriers of applying and getting approved for SSI/SSDI income. It trains outreach workers and those working with the homeless population to apply for SSI/SSDI and walk them through the process until they are approved and also helps to expedite the process for the applicant. SOAR-certified professionals are able to access medical records for clients, and SOAR applications are generally given priority. There is an online, individually-paced training on SAMHSA's website to become SOAR certified. For more info, visit SAMHSA's website.

- o **Winter Warming Centers – Denice Wade**
  - The City of Atlanta will open its warming center(s) when temperatures are at 35 or below for more than 5 hours between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. OR when temperatures are at 32 or below for more than 5 hours between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Partners for HOME will send out an email whenever the City activates its warming center(s). Other agencies who operate winter warming centers will be listed on the email as well. If your agency offers a winter warming program, please reach out to Denice Wade.

- ❖ **Agency Round Robin**
  - o First Presbyterian Church has a Director of Operations of Community Ministries position open. Main duties would be logistics of community ministry program, grant writing, and volunteer management. Apply here.
  - o BestFit offers an equity-designed software that enables organizations to modernize critical functions and support care coordination so their clients can access the services they need when they need them. Email Erica Roberts to learn more.
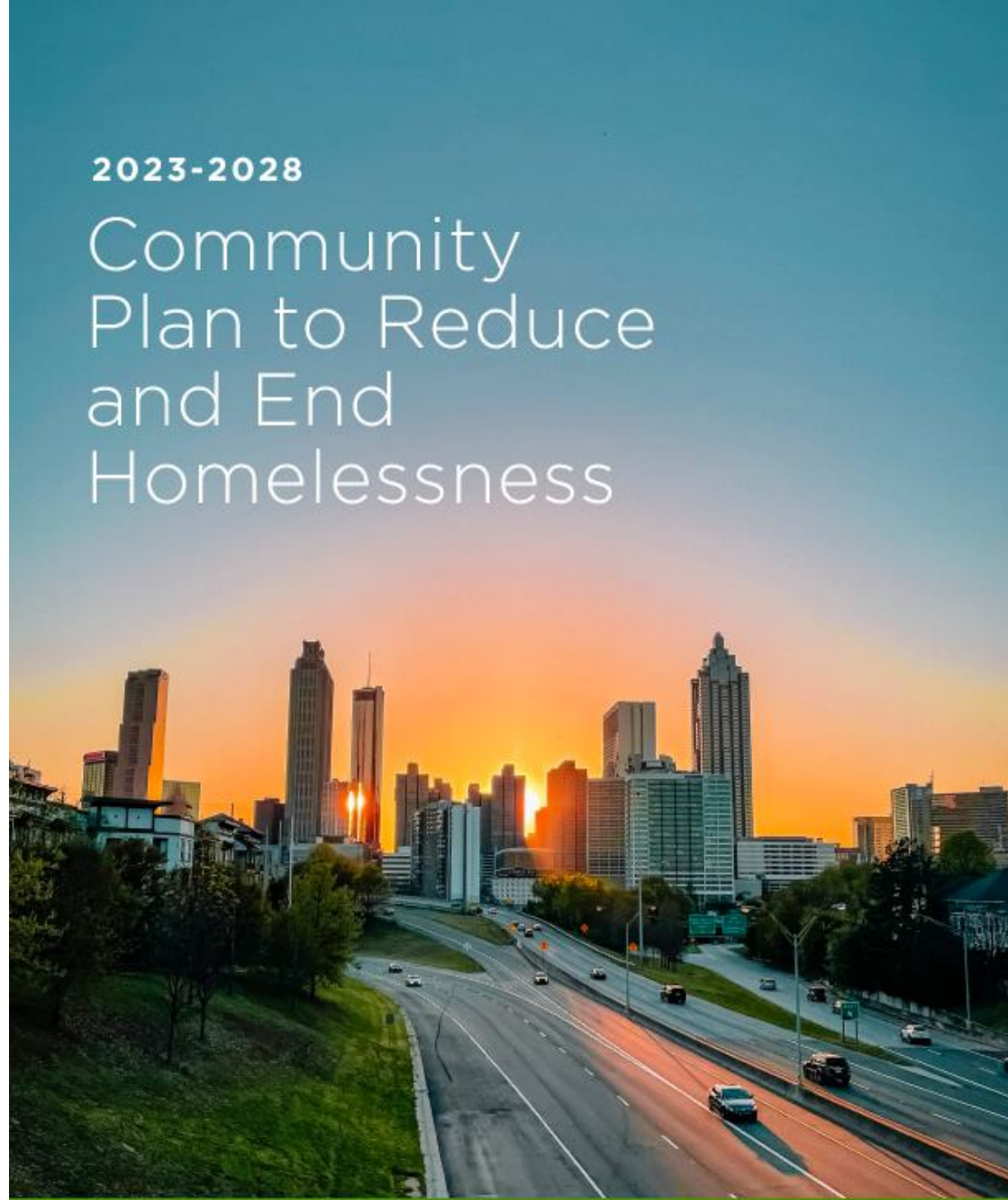
JEDI Community Standards Update
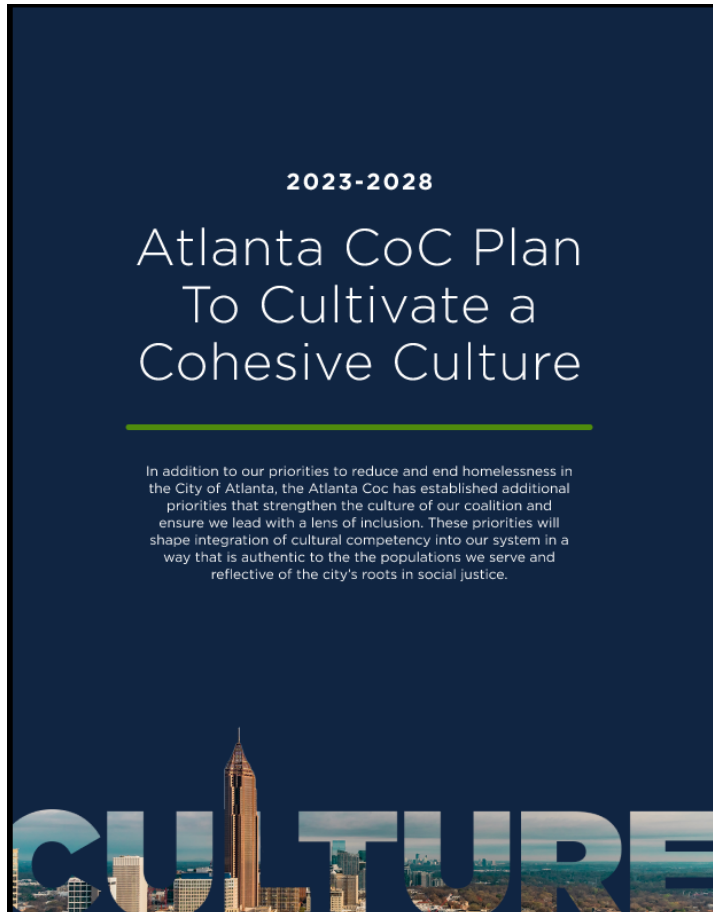
Atlanta CoC Meeting

November 14, 2023

HOME

2023-2028

Community Plan to Reduce and End Homelessness

Atlanta CoC Culture Goals

2023-2028

Atlanta CoC Plan To Cultivate a Cohesive Culture

In addition to our priorities to reduce and end homelessness in the City of Atlanta, the Atlanta Coc has established additional priorities that strengthen the culture of our coalition and ensure we lead with a lens of inclusion. These priorities will shape integration of cultural competency into our system in a way that is authentic to the the populations we serve and reflective of the city's roots in social justice.

The Atlanta CoC has committed to .....

- Strengthening cultural competency **(humility)** around race, sex, sexual orientation, & gender identification.
  - **KPI:** CoC-Wide Equity Standards, Training and Communications.

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Culture Goal 1:
Advance Equity Within the Atlanta CoC

Action Plan: Build a service culture that promotes antiracism diversity, equity and inclusion.

Establish a CoC-wide JEDI vision and standards and integrate learnings through planning and coaching.

Develop a JEDI action plan and metrics to outline behaviors and measure impact of changes.

Develop and implement JEDI actionable goals/objectives/standards to incorporate into funders work.

Develop messaging that highlights disparities in homelessness and work to address JEDI.

Contributing Committees

DEI Taskforce

- First convened in June 2023.
- Established foundational framework of standards.
- Workshopped drafted standards.

AREA Committee: Provider Sub-Committee

- Ad-Hoc meetings.
- Drafted first iteration of community standards.

AREA Committee

- Meets bi-monthly.
- Reviews modified standards.

JEDI Project Development Snapshot!

Framework and Vision Brainstorming. → Vision Development. → Development of Community Standards: *1st Draft* → Refining of Community Standards.
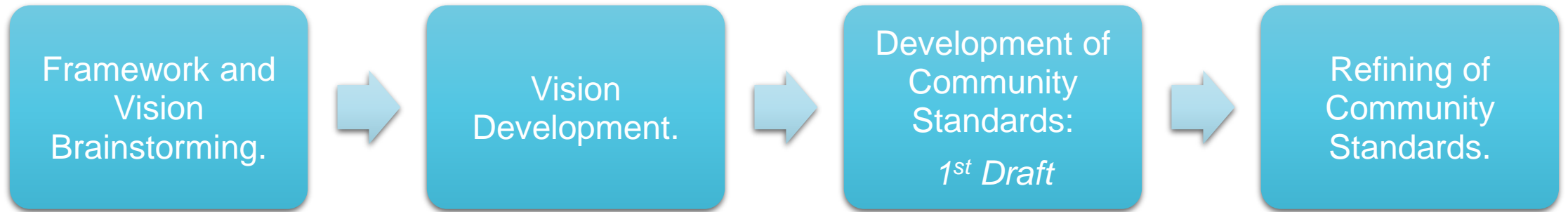
Path to Progress: Next Steps

Present Progress & Review with Atlanta CoC → Refine Standards and Develop Measurement Strategy. → Refine, Modify, & Finalize Measurement Strategy. → Review with AREA Committee. → Review with Atlanta CoC

We want your feedback!

Modify and Finalize Standards.

"BRIDGING GAPS, BUILDING FUTURES:

Fulton County and Partners for HOME Unite to Keep Clients Supported"

From Jail into Housing

Pilot Program:

·This initiative represents a pilot program, marking a crucial step in addressing the intersectionality of homelessness, criminalization, and mental health.

·The success of the program relies on the commitment and collaboration of agencies willing to receive and support housing navigation referrals.

·We need assistance from one or two agencies willing to receive referrals for housing navigation in this critical phase.

PLEASE CONTACT

AFRIKA COTTON
AFRIKA.COTTON@FULTONCOUNTYGA.GOV

Youth System Overview

Progress Update

12-Month Lookback

10/1/22 – 10/31/23

Clients Enrolled in a Permanent Housing Project: **146**

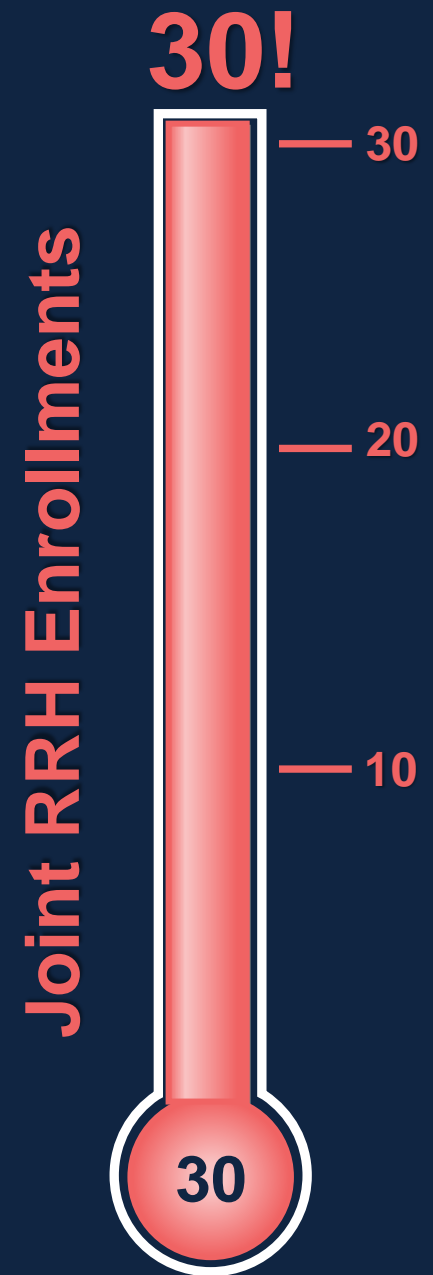Clients Housed: **89**
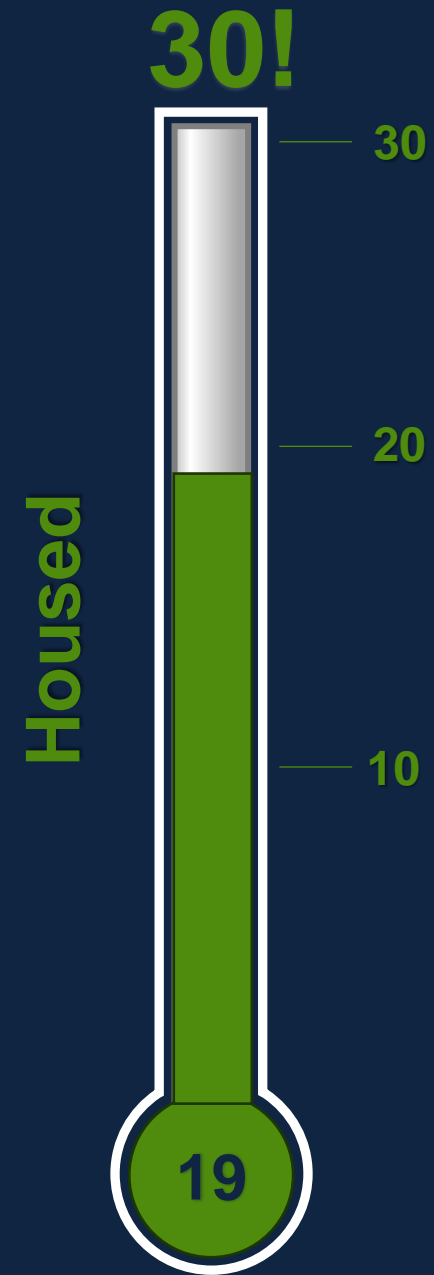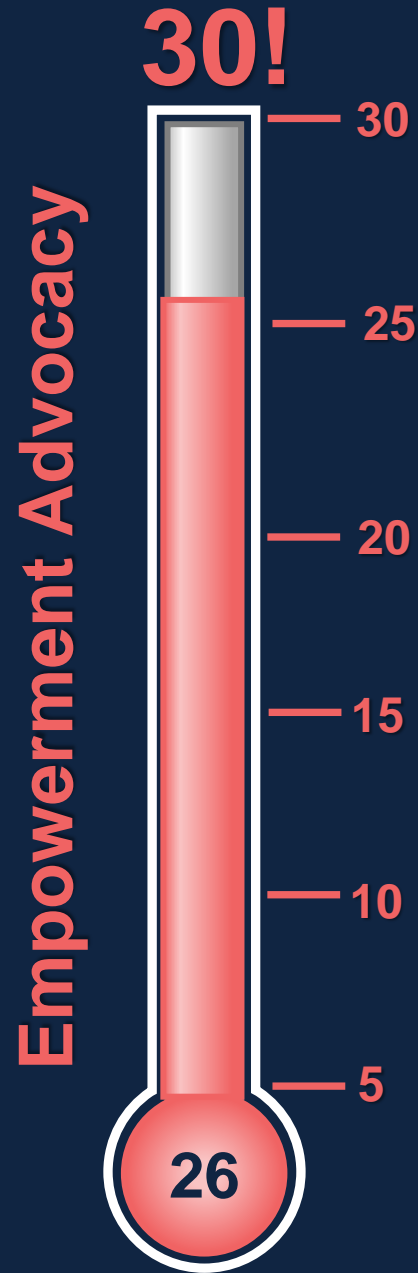
Clients Enrolled in Outreach: **410**
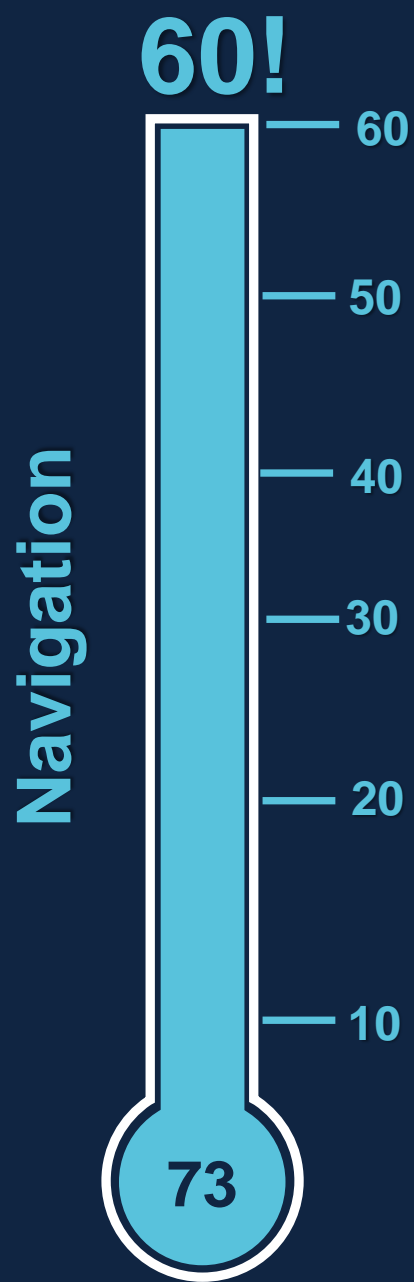
Clients Enrolled in Diversion: **101**

Households Successfully Diverted: **74**

YHDP Progress to Date

10/1/2022 - 11/1/2023

Outreach — 100! — 128

Navigation — 60! — 73

Empowerment Advocacy — 30! — 26

Housed — 30! — 19

Joint RRH Enrollments — 30! — 30
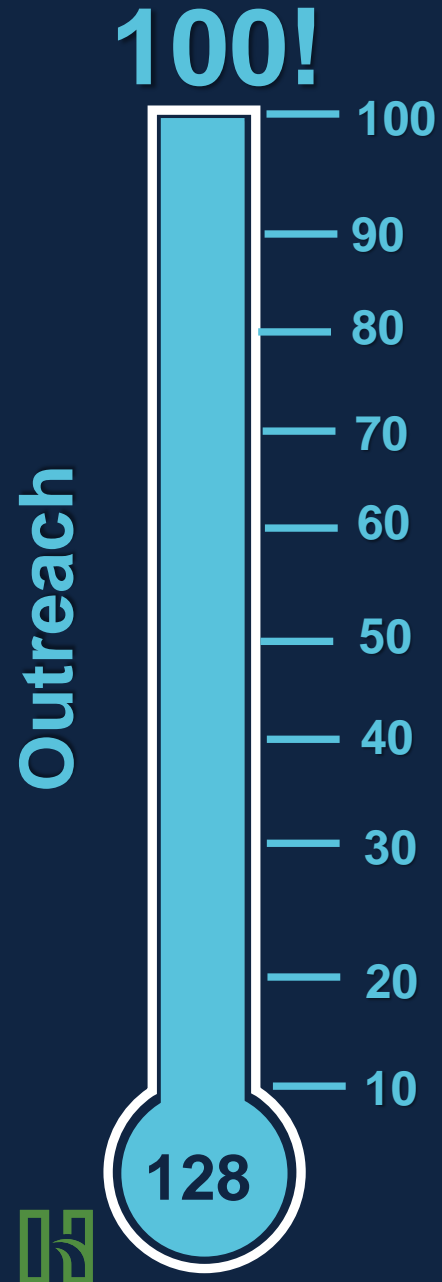
Families Strategic Update

Progress To Date

Family RRH Dashboard
Zaban Family RRH (TANF/Bezos)

4
TANF Approved

23
Non-TANF Approved

27
Enrollments

23
Pending Enrollments

7
Housed

4
Have Income other than Employment

11
No Income/Unemployed

12
Employed

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As of: 11/6/2023

Family RRH & Diversion Initiative

100!
TANF Approved
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
10

100!
Diversion Successful Exits
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
56

100!
Diversion Enrollments
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
83

50!
RRH Housing Placements
40
30
20
10
7
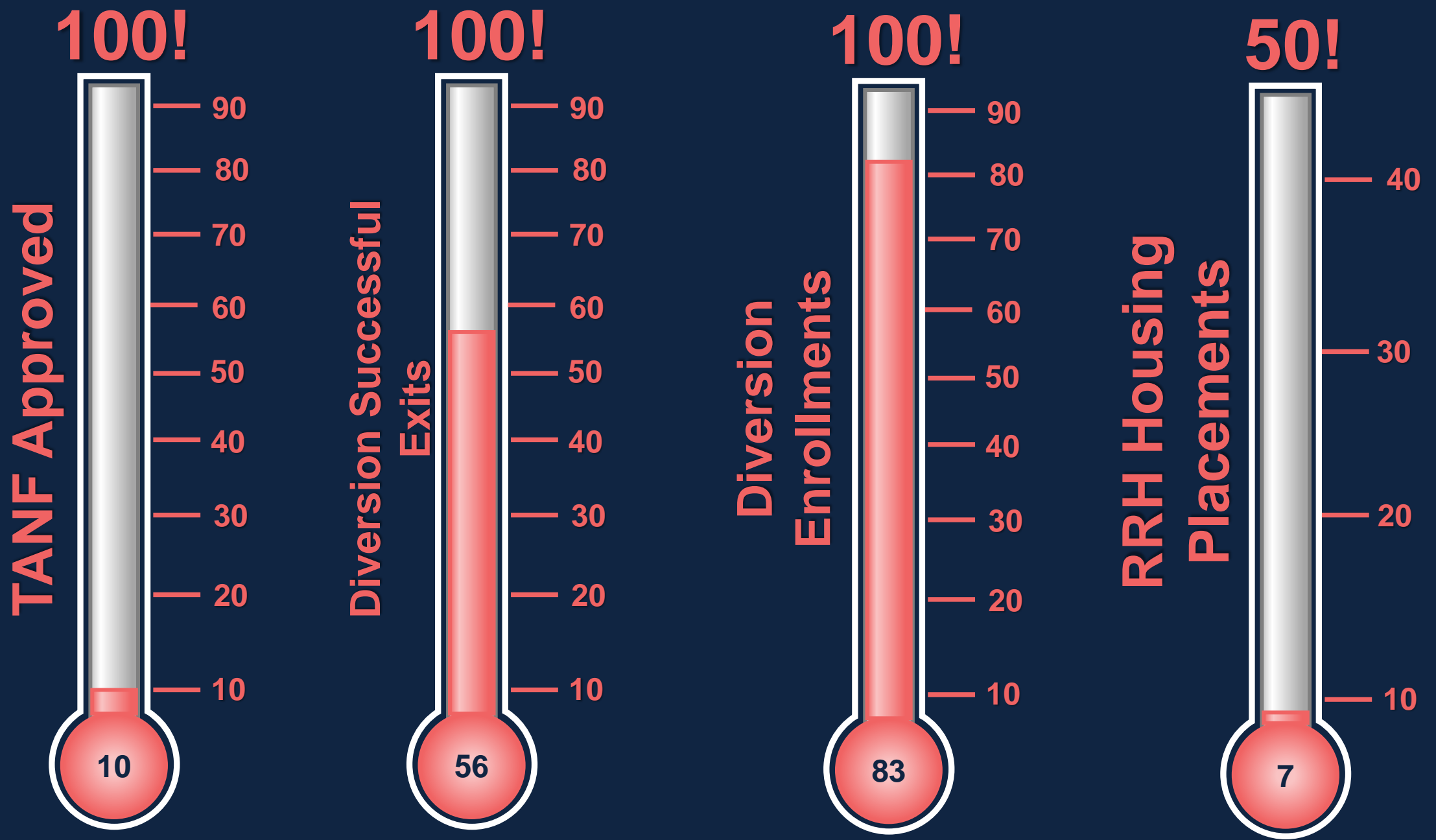
2024 Atlanta Point-in-Time Count

November 14, 2023

PARTNERS FOR
HOME

Point-in-Time Count Overview

What is the Point-in-Time Count?

Why do we do it?

Night Count vs. Day Counts

2024 Count Info

What is the Point-in-Time Count?

Mandated by HUD

- The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. HUD requires that CoCs conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

- The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is a point-in-time inventory of provider programs within a CoC that provide beds and units dedicated to serve people experiencing homelessness (and, for permanent housing projects, where homeless at entry, per the HUD homeless definition), categorized by five Program Types: Emergency Shelter; Transitional Housing; Rapid Re-housing; Safe Haven; and Permanent Supportive Housing.

Why Do We Conduct the Point-in-Time Count?

- Besides being mandated by HUD, the PIT Count allows us to understand trends in homelessness over the years. Collecting data on homelessness and tracking progress can help shape and inform public opinion, increase awareness, and attract resources.

- We also obtain vital demographic data so that our system can adjust to different types of people experiencing homelessness. For example, if homeless youth are not included in local point-in-time counts, their needs could be under-represented.

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Night Count vs. Day Counts

- Most people think of the night count when they think of the Point-in-Time Count, but the day sight counts are a large component as well. Day counts take place at locations around the city utilized by individuals experiencing homelessness (resource centers, drop-in centers, clinics etc.). By conducting surveys with people at these sites, we are able to engage with individuals we may have missed during the night count.

- Day site counts occur starting the Tuesday following the night count until the following Monday, but the survey only asks questions about someone's situation on the Monday of the night count.

- Previous day site locations include:
  - Mercy Care
  - Crossroads
  - Women's Kitchen at HOPE Atlanta
  - Gateway Lobby
  - Lost n Found Youth
  - Church of the Common Ground
  - Covenant House
  - First Step
  - Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
  - Emmaus House
  - St. John Wonder Worker
  - Central Outreach and Advocacy Center
  - CHRIS 180 Drop In Center
  - Good Samaritan Clinic
  - Safe House
  - First Presbyterian Church Breakfast

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2023 Point-in-Time Count Recap

- Night count took place at St. Luke's Episcopal Church for the first time.

- Conducted the night of January 23rd.

- 32 team leaders led groups of 5-7 volunteers around parts of the city to survey individuals experiencing homelessness.

- Over 200 volunteers participated in the night count, with dozens more volunteering during the day sight counts.

- Utilized a staggered check-in system.

- Day site counts took place throughout the following week.

2024 Point-in-Time Count

- Night Count will take place on January 22 with day sites occurring the week following until the next Monday.
  - Will take place at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.
  - Will utilize the staggered wave system.
- Current needs
  - Team Leads
  - Vans and Drivers
  - Day site locations

Questions?

Abby Bracewell

abracewell@partnersforhome.org

SOAR

A Brief Overview

HOME

What is SOAR?

- SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR)
- Program specifically designed to help individuals experiencing homelessness overcome the barriers of applying and getting approved for SSI/SSDI income
- Trains outreach workers and those working specifically with homeless population to apply for SSI/SSDI and walk them through the process until they are approved
- Helps expedite application process

Why SOAR?

Barriers for persons experiencing homelessness to be approved for SSI/SSDI:

- No consistent mailing address for follow up paperwork
- No consistent telephone to be contacted about interviews/disability evaluation appointments
- Having to move to different locations frequently
- In and out of hospitals/institutions
- Sporadic medical care – making accessing medical records challenging

Why SOAR? (continued)

- SOAR Certified outreach workers act as representative for client

- Outreach workers are able to locate clients and keep them up to date on application status and what is needed to continue in the process (additional documents/interviews/appointments) and to meet deadlines

Why SOAR? (continued)

- SOAR Certified professionals are able to access medical records for clients

- SOAR helps trained outreach workers and case workers to help SSA see SSI/SSDI applicant as a more dimensional human being through the Medical Summary Report (MSR)

- Applications marked as SOAR applications generally are given priority

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How to become SOAR Certified

- Online training

- Individual training at own pace

- Consistency is KEY!

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Training Format

1. Modules with quizzes and assignments that cover:

➢ Comprehensive information about SSI/SSDI and SSA's disability determination process

➢ SOAR *Critical Components* of completing and submitting comprehensive and high quality SSI/SSDI applications

2. FINAL EXAM:

➢ Trainees will be assigned a fictious person experiencing homelessness for whom to complete a SOAR Application

➢ Application is graded by a real person at the SOAR program and if the student passes, they receive an electronic certificate.

➢ If person doesn't pass, they can keep trying until they pass

For More Information

To find out more about SOAR and to access the FREE training:

https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/

Questions?

Please Contact Denice Wade, Project Manager for Outreach & Diversion

dwade@partnersforhome.org

City of Atlanta Winter Warming Centers

WHEN:

Actual or forecasted temperature at or below 35 degrees for 5 hours or more between the hours of 8pm and 8am

Actual or forecasted temperature at or below 32 degrees for 5 hours or more between the hours of 8am and 8pm

Forecasted temperature at or below 32 degrees with an 80% chance or greater of any combination snow, rain, sleet, ice, or other precipitation

Forecasted snow accumulation of 1.0 inch or more sticking to the ground in most locations, regardless of temperature

Transports will depart from the Gateway Center starting at 8pm on nights of activation.

****Partners for Home sends out an email blast to the Atlanta COC as soon as we are informed of activation****

WHERE:

Depending on capacity, One or Both Locations:

Old Adamsville Recreation Center: 3404 Delmar Lane SW Atlanta GA 30331

Central Park Recreation Center: 400 Merritts Ave NE Atlanta GA 30308

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Other Warming Centers in Atlanta

Atlanta Mission

- My Sister's House (women and children)
- Shepherd's Inn (men)

Gateway

- Men, women, and families

Covenant House

- Youth ages 18 – 24

Zaban Paradies

- Couples

Salvation Army

- Men, women, and families

More Details →

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BestFit

Provide holistic, people -centered support at scale.

Modern client resource management that makes client eligibility and intake simple.
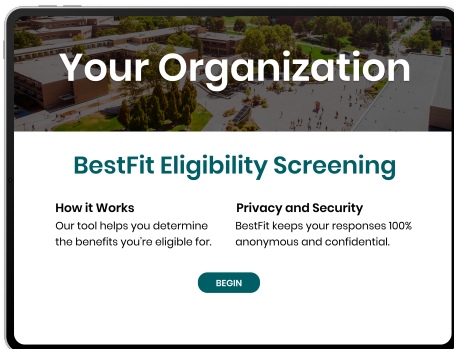
How it works

BestFit's equity-designed software enables teams to modernize critical functions and support care coordination so their clients can access the services they need, when they need it.
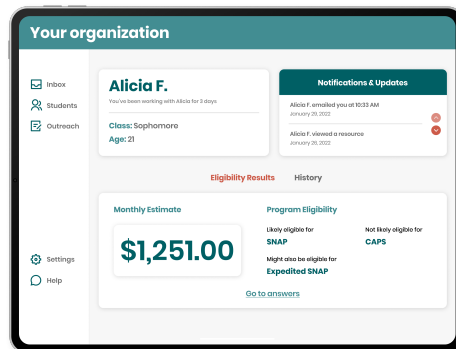
1. You share our Eligibility Screening Tool

We screen for 6 different programs & give personalized eligibility results.
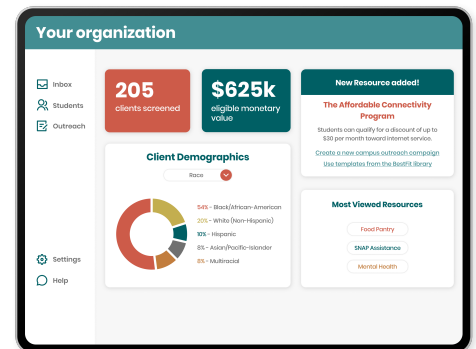

Your Organization

BestFit Eligibility Screening

How it Works
Our tool helps you determine the benefits you're eligible for.

Privacy and Security
BestFit keeps your responses 100% anonymous and confidential.

BEGIN

2. Coordinate follow-up support.

Staff can see eligibility results to help coordinate next steps quicker.

Your organization

Inbox
Students
Outreach

Alicia F.
You've been working with Alicia for 3 days

Class: Sophomore
Age: 21

Notifications & Updates
Alicia F. emailed you at 10:33 AM
January 29, 2022
Alicia F. viewed a resource
January 29, 2022

Eligibility Results   History

Monthly Estimate
$1,251.00

Program Eligibility
Likely eligible for
SNAP
Might also be eligible for
Expedited SNAP
Not likely eligible for
CAPS

Go to answers

Settings
Help

3. Keep track of important metrics

Track aggregate data ideal for impact reporting & compliance.

Your organization

Inbox
Students
Outreach

205 clients screened
$625k eligible monetary value

New Resource added!
The Affordable Connectivity Program
Students can qualify for a discount of up to $30 per month toward internet service.
Create a new campus outreach campaign
Use templates from the BestFit library

Client Demographics
Race

54% - Black/African-American
20% - White (Non-Hispanic)
10% - Hispanic
8% - Asian/Pacific-Islander
8% - Multiracial

Most Viewed Resources
Food Pantry
SNAP Assistance
Mental Health

Settings
Help

Our impact

In 2021, we launched our pilot program for college students in Georgia, and we've been able to make real, valuable impact.

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY
Chattahoochee Tech
STEP AHEAD SCHOLARS

169
students utilized BestFit's platform

43%
were currently/formerly housing insecure

~ $500k
total annual eligible monetary amount in benefits

To learn more, visit our website (**www.best-fit.app**) or email us at **hello@best-fit.app**.

Our funders & partners

Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation

imaginable futures A VENTURE OF THE OMIDYAR GROUP

CENTER for CIVIC innovation ATLANTA

40 SCHOOLS