

100,000 HOMES

For 100,000 homeless individuals and families

POWERED BY COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS



The following questions and answers are from the webinar on the VI-SPDAT Pre-screen presented by Iain De Jong on Tuesday, January 7, 2014. If you have additional questions for Iain, you may e-mail him at idejong@orgcode.com. Questions related to QuickBase may be directed to Jessica Marcus on the 100,000 Homes Campaign team at jmarcus@cmtysolutions.org. Thank you!

What HMIS vendors have this tool programmed into their systems? Do you know?

To the best of our knowledge, Bowman Systems is the only one to integrate it on a larger scale. We have seen some local customizations with products like Efforts to Outcomes from Social Solutions. We are happy to work with any HMIS vendor to put it into the HMIS, but we do ask they contact us first for permission to do so. We provide the tool for free to the HMIS vendor.

Another question (sorry) - can we use QuickBase to enter VI-SPDAT info if HMIS systems aren't set up as of yet for PIT count?

Yes. Contact Jessica Marcus with the 100K Homes Campaign for more information on how: jmarcus@cmtysolutions.org

Will the VI version cover the same responses as the more in-depth SPDAT - where would the overlap occur?

The VI-SPDAT covers all of the domains and component areas of the full SPDAT. Whereas a prescreen like the VI-SPDAT will tell you about the presence of an issue that may be impacting housing stability, the full SPDAT will give you lots more information about the depth of the issue. Also, the full SPDAT can be used to help guide case management and supports very effectively, and provides very robust information to help inform future professional development opportunities, funding decisions, service delivery, etc.

OK and then if they were targeted for the full SPDAT are there overlapping questions? I am asking from a database perspective so that we would figure out what needs to be re-entered later or if some part would flow through.

If you would like specific details on which question in the VI-SPDAT corresponds to which components in the full SPDAT, send me an email at idejong@orgcode.com. Keep in mind, though, that while the VI-SPDAT is a scripted survey, the full SPDAT is not.

Are people completing these in real-time on the computer with the participant sitting next to them?

There isn't one preferred way to complete the survey. We have seen paper versions and tablet data capture in street outreach through to interviews in intake workers offices in shelters – and lots of variation in between.

Most of our outreach clients are paranoid and will not give name or SS#... should we just leave it blank?

Regardless of the reason, if someone will not complete a particular field you can leave it blank or refused.

Why does VI-SPDAT use 2 years if the CH def still uses one year?

While your community may choose (and for funding purposes need to) use the CH definition, the VI-SPDAT question directly links to the component of the full SPDAT that examines acuity amongst persons that have experienced homelessness for two or more years.

Am I the only one confused by the length of homelessness questions?

Probably not. But hard to say. Lots of people are confused about lots of things.

The good news is that it seems to work well in the field.

Hi all! When quickbase outputs chronic numbers, is that still using the HUD definition though?

Contact Jessica Marcus with the 100K Homes Campaign for more information about this: jmarcus@cmtysolutions.org

Would "Other" include things like staying with a friend?

It can.

What is the reason for recording Social Security Number? People are not comfortable & some may not know.

It assists with unduplicated entries in the database used to record participant information. If a person is uncomfortable or doesn't know, skip it. In the application of the VI-SPDAT to date this has not been a large issue, including application of the tool in all sorts of different environments and all different types of day.

In question #2, does "homeless" mean on the streets, or can it include staying with family or couch-surfing?

That is up to your jurisdiction to determine. There is considerable variation from a policy, programming and funding perspective on this issue. So long as you are consistent locally it shouldn't be a problem.

Does the interaction guidance apply for individuals and homeless families equally?

Hmm...if by "interaction guidance" you mean how to approach and engage with people to complete the survey, yes. If you meant something else, email me at idejong@orgcode.com and we can discuss further.

Am I to understand that if I survey someone who is at one of our tent cities on the day of the survey and they report that they stayed with a friend at their motel room am I to still to survey them?

from Mike Shore to All Participants:

are you talking about in outreach or for PIT?

from [questioner] to All Participants:

both

People should only be counted and surveyed once for the Point in Time Count.

If someone has already been surveyed (as in your community implemented the VI-SPDAT *prior* to your PIT Count), then count them and collect HUD required information during the PIT, but do not survey them again.

Can Iain speak to the differentiation of "heat stroke" versus the Vulnerability Index's "brain stroke" in question 26?

Heat stroke is a serious heat injury that can damage the brain or other internal organs. The heat regulation system of the brain fails and the body overheats.

What if an individual refuses to answer some or none of the questions. What advise do you give volunteers or surveyor? And how they handle hostile interviewees?

Participants in the survey absolutely have the right to refuse any question that they wish. This should be made clear to people in your introduction. Furthermore, they should know that if they refuse it will not have negative consequences. To date, there has not been a large non-participation rate for any particular question or for the survey as a whole.

Volunteers or surveyors that encounter a hostile interviewee should be trained to withdraw, mind their own safety, and exit the situation.

Should #39 be consumed, rather than used? What is someone has cooked with cooking wine?

This suggestion may be considered in future versions of the tool. Because of the context of where the question comes, in none of the testing I have done or surveys I have completed has “used” been considered to mean anything other than consuming it. But you may a good point nonetheless.

#42 -47, is that a one for each question, or a one for any YES? In other words, will there only be one 1 score?

These questions are all grouped together. What that means is, if they say YES to any question here the score is 1. They do NOT get 1 point for each YES.

ServicePoint/HMIS has a 250 character limit on questions, and question 50 has more than that. Is there a workaround? To use the same wording, we've split the question in half.

I can't speak for Bowman Systems. If this is an issue, I would suggest taking it up directly with them. They have been very receptive and helpful in working with us to include these tools.

Please clarify scoring with question 14, 15 and 16

These questions are grouped together. If the participant says YES to question 14 **or** NO to question 15 **or** NO to question 16 the score is 1.

The only way someone can score 0 in this section is if they say NO or refused to question 14 **AND** indicated YES or refused to question 15 **AND** indicated YES or refused to question 16.

If using this tool on an ongoing basis as part of coordinated access and an individual scored for supportive housing, then would the full SPDAT be completed?

It is our recommendation that if the person is going to be recommended for permanent supportive housing or even rapid re-housing that the full SPDAT be completed and used. The full SPDAT helps shine a light on nuances on the acuity of an issue and helps inform case management services. It can also be used for measuring changes in acuity overtime. Please note that if your organization/community goes the route of the full SPDAT then you need to be trained on how to use the full tool. It is more involved than the VI-SPDAT. Email me at idejong@orgcode.com if you have any questions about it.

Will you send us this information in writing also so we can investigate/tap into it if needed.

Your wish is our command.

You may have already addressed this but I am wondering if assessors can alter participant responses if they are aware of collateral information that is contrary to the participant response?

The VI-SPDAT is solely a self-report. The Full SPDAT has mechanisms in place to gather information through four possible methods, thereby providing multiple lines of evidence on each particular area of acuity.

In question #3, do visits to urgent care count?

Yes.

For the question on frostbite and hypothermia and heat stroke/exhaustion, the question indicates need to have "several cases of"/"history of." What should qualify as yes?

"History of" simply means that it happened in the past. The condition does not have to be current or ongoing.

Is there a usable, digital form of the VI-SPDAT/SPDAT. I can take the info on a tablet but I'm curious.

The best solution is probably to work off your tablet either in the Quickbase solution or in any manner that your HMIS allows.

Iain, we've been getting a lot of questions about high 2s that are disabled, mentally ill, on SSI, physically disabled. Is there a certain kind of rapid rehousing intervention recommended here, or how would you respond to claims that these be moved up to be 3's?

First of all for all readers, the reference to 2s and 3s in this question is an LA County specific situation in terms of how they are grouping and prioritizing service participants.

I wouldn't advocate that they automatically move up just because they are disabled, mentally ill, on SSI or physically disabled. The data is quite clear: most people with the conditions that you mentioned will never experience homelessness. I think what we need to do is learn how other people in your community with these same presenting issues are accessing and maintaining housing.

Why does the question ask about homeless for 2 years, instead of the HUD based question for 1 year?

We covered this earlier in the discussion (I think). But to reiterate and maybe even be more clear, we are NOT suggesting your community stops trying to figure out which people meet HUD's definition of homelessness. That is necessary for a whole whack of reasons. But, for the purposes of the VI-SPDAT, the length of homelessness is directly related to the components of the SPDAT that examine length of homelessness.

Is there a web based VI-SPDAT/SPDAT that would automatically populate into Quick Base? (i.e. street outreach using ipads/tablets in the field)

One of the cool things about QuickBase is that it works quite well in the field and isn't clumsy like some other databases that are applied in the context of street outreach.

How does SPDAT apply to people who have to have a verifiable income?

The SPDAT (and in this instance I am talking about the full SPDAT) examines income in the component on Personal Administration and Money Management. It covers all types of income – formal and informal; what a person would tell the IRS about and what they wouldn't; government benefits, employment income and under the table income is all considered.

Will agencies who use this assessment tool receive funding?

For better or for worse, no one gives me a say on who gets money and who doesn't.

If you mean "Will agencies receive funding from OrgCode if we use the tool?" the answer is no. We give away the SPDAT for free, and along with Community Solutions give away the VI-SPDAT for free. (As an aside, if you need advice on housing and homelessness, we are good people to turn to. If you need advice on business, maybe not so much.)

Cheekiness aside, organizations and communities that are doing coordinated access with a common assessment such as the VI-SPDAT and SPDAT should be well positioned for success in service and funding. However, I don't want anyone to think that it will guarantee funding for you. There are too many variables at play to make statements like that, and without knowing the context of your local jurisdiction it is difficult to provide advice in this area.