



20,000 Homes Campaign
Reducing Chronic Homelessness Description
&
Question and Answer Document

September 20, 2018

INTRODUCTION

This document provides a description of what it means to be “reducing” chronic homelessness in the 20KHomes Campaign and follows with a question and answer section to address the most commonly asked questions on this topic. This document is primarily intended for 20KHomes communities and complements other information included on the [20KHomes](#) website. This document will continue to be updated as needed to further clarify information and/or to include additional questions.

REDUCE IN 20KHOMES

20,000 Homes Campaign (20KHomes) communities work through three cohorts to achieve key milestones on their journey to ending chronic homelessness:

1. **By-Name List** - developing and achieving a comprehensive, real-time [quality By-Name List](#) that produces reliable data.
2. **Reduce to Zero** – driving monthly reductions in actively homeless numbers (the topic of this document)
3. **Zero for All** - reaching and sustaining [functional zero chronic homelessness](#) (then expanding to new populations)



REDUCE DESCRIPTION

“Reduce” refers to making reductions in the number of people actively experiencing chronic homelessness. Communities can only reliably and consistently monitor reductions once they have achieved a quality By-Name List and have chosen a “baseline month” (the first month from which reductions will be measured). But even with a quality By-Name List and clear baseline, there are many ways that “reducing” can be defined and measured. In this section we will outline the ways in which “reducing” is being measured and reported in the 20KHomes Campaign.

The three key reduction indicators used in the 20KHomes Campaign are pictured below, followed by a further description.



Indicator #1 – Below Baseline (2 measures)

1.1 Total # of Communities with a Quality Baseline Month

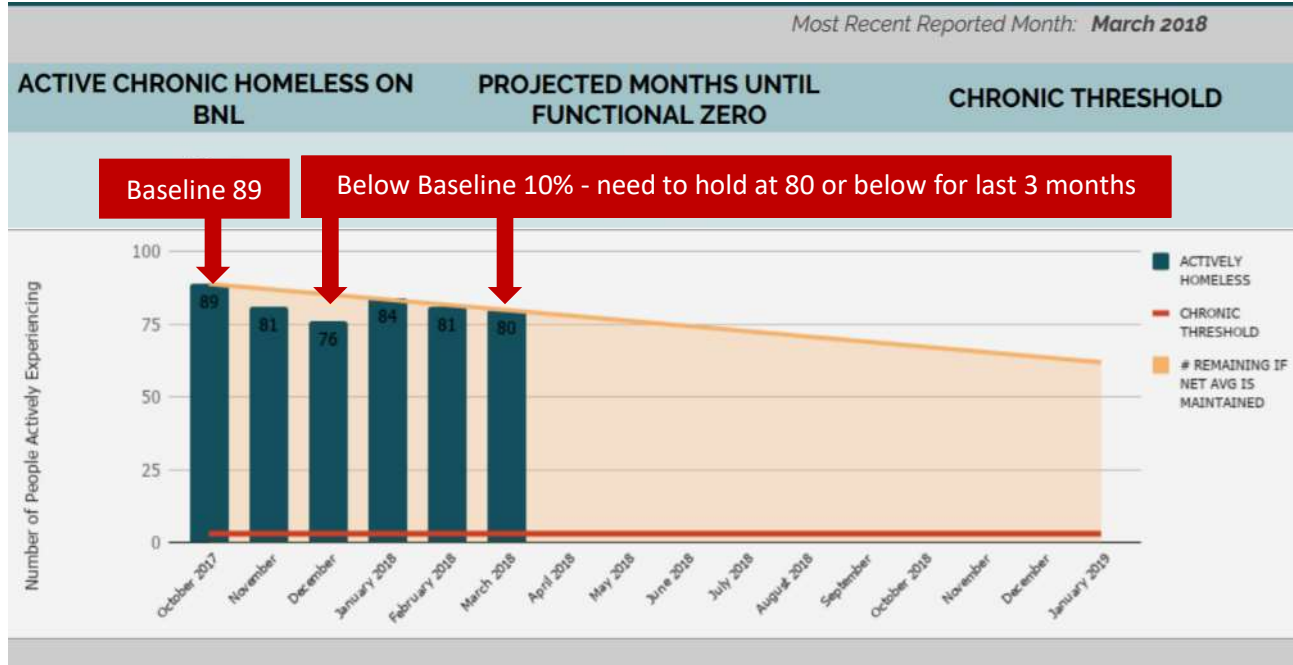
Once communities have a quality By-Name List, they confirm a starting baseline month within their active chronic homeless data. This number should reflect a reasonably accurate number (no imminent significant changes expected e.g. data clean-up, enumeration) as it will be used to compare on-going progress.

1.2 Total # of Communities Below Baseline

This measure is defined as the number of active chronic homelessness being below the quality baseline number for the most recent past three months and where the scope of reduction is either 5%, 10% or 15% below baseline (relative to the number of actively chronic homeless) as follows:

- 500+ active chronic homeless baseline – 5% below baseline in last three months
- 50-499 active chronic homeless baseline – 10% below baseline in last three months
- 1-49 active chronic homeless baseline – 15% below baseline in last three months

See an example below where the baseline is 89 of which 10% below baseline would be 80 or less. There were only two months below baseline and they were not in the last three months – so this community is not yet at below baseline. If they maintain 80 or below for the next two months they would reach “below baseline”.



The total number of communities below baseline is included on the progress bar on the front page of the 20KHome website (see below).



Community data will be reviewed monthly for this measure and it is possible for a community to move in and out of achieving “below baseline”.

Achieving “below baseline” is an excellent start to reducing. The next step is to measure more significant changes over time.

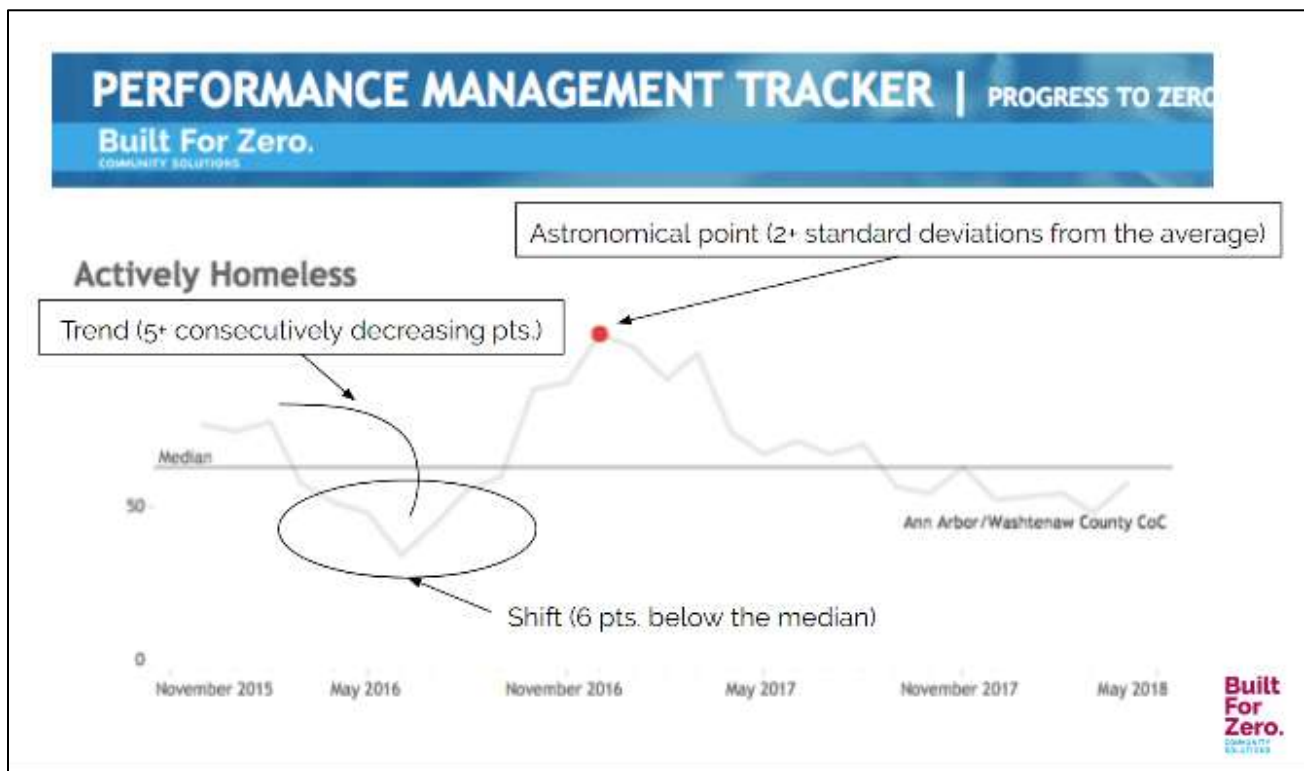
Indicator #2 – Significant Reductions (two measures)

The next two measures look at whether a community is “on-track” for a significant reduction or whether they have “achieved” a significant reduction.

For a community to be noted as having a “significant reduction” they must have achieved a “trend” or a “shift” in their data. These measures rely on a “run chart”. A run chart is simply a line graph of data plotted over time. A run chart is one of the most important tools for telling the difference between normal/random variations in data and when longer lasting and statistically significant change has occurred. We will be focusing on the following two rules of run charts that serve as signals of change (where a minimum of 10 data points is required to apply these rules):

- a. **Trend** – 5 or more consecutively increasing or decreasing points
- b. **Shift** – 6 or more consecutive points above or below the median¹

A trend and a shift are both signals of change and one is not “better” than the other. Using run charts helps us to recognize significant changes and to not overly react to one or more data points that may just be part of normal variations in data. See the sample run chart shown below.



For more information on run charts see this [Health Quality Ontario 2-pager](#) and these two videos (Video #1 – [Run Chart Rules](#), Video #2 – [Run Chart Examples](#)).

¹ The **median** (the 50th percentile) is the number in the middle of your data set, found by ordering all the data points and picking the one in the middle. If the number of observations is even, the median is the average of the two middle values.

2.1 Total # of Communities On-Track for Reducing

Being “on track” for reducing is great interim milestone that communities can recognize on their way to a trend or a shift.

On Track for a Trend	On Track for a Shift
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 consecutive months of data reported • 3 consecutive months with downward trend - last month of reported data is within last 3 months • For the purposes of a trend: If the value of two or more successive points is the same, ignore one of the points when counting. Like values do not make or break a trend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 consecutive months of data reported • 3 months of data below the median - last month of reported data is within last 3 months • For the purposes of a shift: values that fall on the median do not add to nor break a shift. Skip values that fall on the median and continue counting.

Both of these measures demonstrate approaching significant change, just in different ways.

2.2 Total # of Communities with a Significant Reduction

Experiencing a downward shift or trend is being recognized in the 20KHomes as a “significant reduction”.

Experiencing Downward Trend	Experiencing Downward Shift
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 consecutive months of data reported • 5 consecutive months or more in downward trajectory - last month of reported data is within last 3 months • For the purposes of a trend: If the value of two or more successive points is the same, ignore one of the points when counting. Like values do not make or break a trend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 consecutive months of data reported • 6 months of data below the median - last month of reported data is within last 3 months • For the purposes of a shift: values that fall on the median do not add to nor break a shift. Skip values that fall on the median and continue counting.

Both of these measures demonstrate significant change, just in different ways.

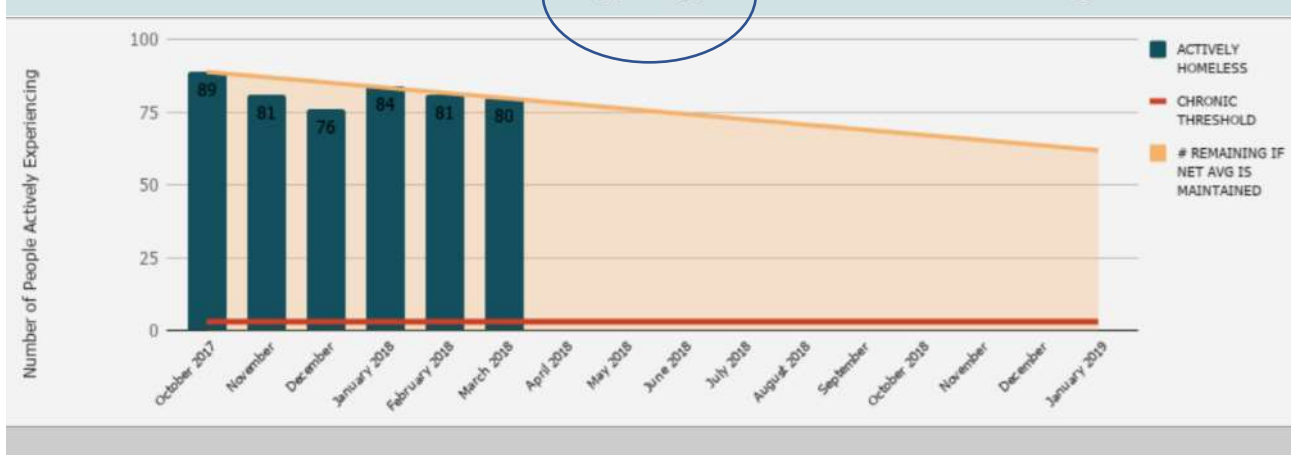
Indicator #3 – Final Mile (1 measure)

1. Total # of Communities in the Final Mile

- Communities for whom their countdown tracker is showing that they are projected to reach functional zero on chronic homelessness within the next 12 months or less based on average inflow and outflow rates.

Below is an example of a countdown tracker. This one is showing about three years (38.9) months projected to reach functional zero.

ACTIVE CHRONIC HOMELESS ON BNL	PROJECTED MONTHS UNTIL FUNCTIONAL ZERO	CHRONIC THRESHOLD
80	38.9	3



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following nine questions are answered below:

- Q#1. Is being in the 20KHomes Reduce Cohort the same as reducing?
- Q#2. What should communities consider when choosing a “baseline month”?
- Q#3. Do communities often see an increase in their numbers?
- Q#4. What happens if a community was approaching a downward trend, but their numbers go back up?
- Q#5. What happens if a community was approaching a downward shift, but their numbers go above the median?
- Q#6. How will 20KHomes establish a community’s median to assist in measuring reductions?
- Q#7. Under what circumstances will a new median be calculated and what is the process?
- Q#8. Why was the “final mile” of reducing set at a projected functional end within 12 months?
- Q#9. Will the 20KHomes Campaign be publicly sharing our numbers?

Q#1. Is being in the 20KHomes Reduce Cohort the same as reducing?

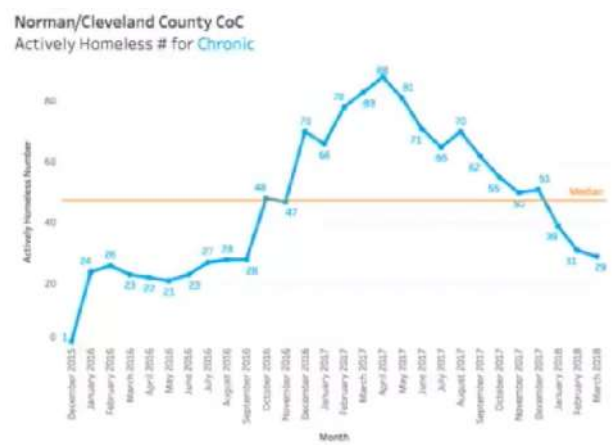
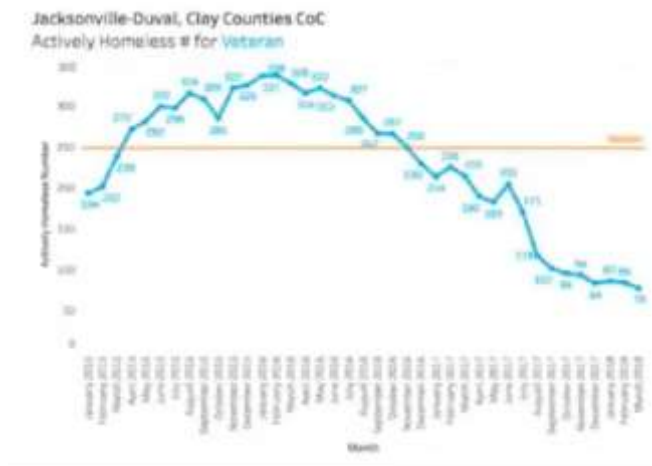
Participating 20KHomes Campaign communities who have achieved a quality By-Name List move to the Reduce Cohort. However, being in the Reduce Cohort is not the same as reducing. Communities in the Reduce Cohort could be holding steady with their active chronically homeless numbers or even increasing while they continue to strengthen their data and work to determine the structure, resources and activities necessary to begin to reduce their inflow and/or increase their outflow to result in a net reduction in active chronically homeless numbers.

Q#2. What should communities consider when choosing a “baseline month”?

Communities choose their baseline month once they have a quality By-Name List. Communities will generally choose the month in which they achieved a quality By-Name List unless they are aware of some reason that the data is not as accurate as it could be (e.g., in a subsequent month they did a data clean up, just completed enumeration and added more people, a significant new partner began reporting data, etc.). The baseline month does not need to be “perfect” but should be as reasonably accurate and complete as possible. A community can request to have their baseline re-evaluated if needed.

Q#3. Do communities often see an increase in their numbers?

As communities continue to strengthen their By-Name List (even after reaching a quality By-Name List), it is not unusual to see increases in actively homeless numbers before reductions start to occur. **A strengthening of your numbers should always be celebrated!** See examples below of communities in the US who saw their numbers go up before they started to go down.



Q#4. What happens if a community was approaching a downward trend, but their numbers go back up?

A trend (5 or more downward points in a row) is difficult to achieve as there are often fluctuations in data. If a community has a month where the number of actively chronic homeless numbers increase, it does move them out of a downward trend. They begin counting again from that new number (three consecutive months of reductions to be “on track” or five consecutive months to be “significantly reducing”). But never fear – it is more likely that communities will experience shifts in their data with fluctuations below the median (see #3 and #4 in the description above and #5 in the Q&A below for further information).

Q#5. What happens if a community was approaching a downward shift, but their numbers go above the median?

When you are trying your best to urgently end chronic homelessness, continue to celebrate wherever you are. Even if your numbers increase, your data can point to the problem area allowing you to respond in real-time. If a community has a month where the number of actively chronic homeless numbers increase above the median, it does move them out of a downward shift. They begin counting again when they have a data point that falls below the median (three consecutive months below the median to be “on track” or six consecutive months to be “actively reducing”). See #3 in the description above for further information.

Q#6. How will 20KHomes establish a community’s median to assist in measuring reductions?

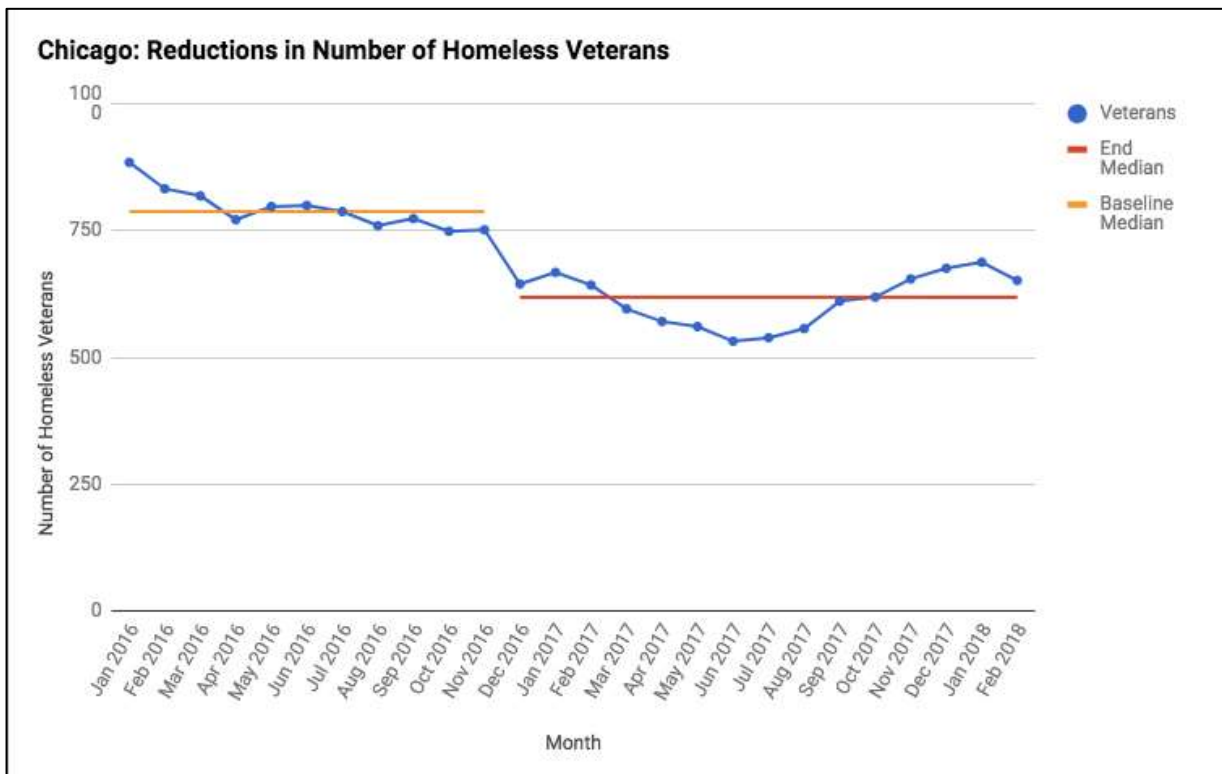
To establish your median, we will first establish your baseline month with you (see Q#2 in the Q&A above). Once you have a baseline month, the median will fluctuate automatically until you reach a total of 10 months of data (including your baseline).

When you reach 10 months of data, the median line will remain static. This median line would remain static until your community experiences a “trend” or a “shift” (see Q#7 below regarding recalculating the median).

Q#7. Under what circumstances will a new median be calculated and what is the process?

The median will be recalculated by 20KHomes staff in consultation with the community under two circumstances:

1. When a community’s baseline month changes significantly because of a large data clean-up or other factors. The recalculation of the median would be completed as outlined in Q#6.
2. When you experience a shift or a trend, your median will be recalculated using the shift or trend data to recalculate a median. That new median will fluctuate automatically until there are 10 months of data and then it will be static. Note that this is the current plan but remains under review. See Chicago example below (would have recalculated the median again on the second shift but data ceased to be provided).



Q#8. Why was the “final mile” of reducing set at a projected functional end within 12 months or less?

The “final mile” signals that a community is close to a functional end to chronic homelessness. Looking at a one-year time frame allows communities time to focus strategies and be supported by stakeholders to assist them to make that final push to zero and begin considering communication and sustainability strategies for when they reach that point.

Q#9. Will the 20KHomes Campaign be publicly sharing our numbers?

Aggregate (non-community identifying) campaign numbers are posted on the front page of the 20KHomes website (see below) which is updated weekly.



More detailed numbers are included on the [Tracking our progress](#) page which includes a progress snapshot (see below) and a more detailed [Campaign Progress Measures](#) PowerPoint document which are updated monthly.



Individual community numbers will only be shared publicly on the 20KHomes website after a conversation and confirmation of numbers and context with the 20KHomes lead and data lead for that community. Numbers for individual communities will be shared with other participating 20KHomes Collaborative communities in the following ways:

- The password-protected Change Package Website (where other communities can view your numbers but are asked to not share them).
- 20KHomes Collaborative webinars and Learning Sessions.