System Planning and Optimization Concepts (SPOC)
Detailed Instructions

1. Data Needed

To use SPOC, you will need information on your community's homeless population, your system's capacity to serve homeless households, and how system projects are performing. Focus Strategies recommends using your community's most recent Point In Time (PIT) and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data for determining the population and capacity. If your community has recently conducted an in-depth performance analysis using a tool, such as Focus Strategies' Base Year Calculator (BYC), that data should be used to estimate your current performance. In absence of that information, you can use information from the HUD System Performance Measures, internal evaluations, or other community knowledge to estimate performance. Additional details are provided in the sections below.

2. Population Data/Point In Time Count

SPOC calculates changes to the number of sheltered and unsheltered **_households_** in a community after one year. Using your community's most recent PIT data, enter the total number of sheltered and unsheltered households into the appropriate fields.

3. Population Dynamics/Recent Changes in Unsheltered Homelessness

SPOC estimates the number of newly homeless households in a community, based on whether the community's unsheltered population has been increasing or decreasing in the recent past. Select whether the unsheltered population has generally "decreased," "stayed the same," or "increased" over the last two PIT counts.

4. Capacity Data/Housing Inventory Count

SPOC incorporates data for four homeless project types – emergency shelter (ES), transitional housing (TH), rapid rehousing (RRH), and permanent supportive housing (PSH) – to estimate the overall system's ability to serve and house homeless households. In the "Capacity" field for each project type, enter the number of **_households_** that can be served in that project type *at any point in time* (please do not enter the number served over an entire year). For most communities, the best source of this data is the most recent HIC. The number entered should be the sum of the number of **_units_** for family households and the number of **_beds_** for adult and child only households, for all projects of each project type.

You may wish to add capacity based on seasonal or overflow beds or other project types in the community. Communities with Safe Havens, Interim Housing, or Other Permanent Housing may include those projects' capacity along with the project type that they most resemble.[1]

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[1] Focus Strategies typically recommends grouping Safe Haven and Interim Housing capacity as ES and Other Permanent Housing capacity as PSH. The decision, however, should be based on the program structure of each project. For example, if an Interim Housing project operates more like TH than ES, that project's capacity should be included in the TH capacity.

5. Performance Data

Select the option that best describes your community's performance for the measures described in the table below. When possible, use data from a recent system performance evaluation to select the correct option. If your community hasn't conducted a recent system performance evaluation, Focus Strategies recommends using data from the HUD System Performance Measures or other community knowledge to help select the best choice. Select the option that represents how most of your community's projects perform on average, rather than the best or worst performing projects, as the model assigns the chosen value to all capacity for that project type.

Refer to the "Overview of SWAP Performance Measures" document on our website for more information and definitions on the performance measures used by SPOC. Find this resource by clicking here.

Measure	Description	Choices		
Emergency Shelter				
Length of Stay	Average number of days households remain in ES	*Longer than (>) 100 days*	*60 to 100 days*	*Less than (<) 60 days*
Utilization Rate	Average percent of ES adult bed/family unit capacity that is used *over the course of a year*	*Less than (>) 90%*	*90 to 95%*	*Greater than (<) 95%*
Entries from Unsheltered Homelessness	Average percent of households entering ES that are unsheltered at project entry	*Less than (<) 75%*	*75 to 95%*	*Greater than (>) 90%*
Exits to Permanent Housing	Average percent of households served in ES that exit to permanent housing	*Less than (<) 15%*	*15 to 40%*	*Greater than (>) 40%*
Transitional Housing				
Length of Stay	Average number of days households remain in TH	*Longer than (>) 240 days*	*180 to 240 days*	*Less than (<) 180 days*
Utilization Rate	Average percent of TH adult bed/family unit capacity that is used over the course of a year	*Less than (>) 90%*	*90 to 95%*	*Greater than (<) 95%*
Entries from Literal Homelessness	Average percent of households entering TH that are unsheltered or in emergency shelter at project entry	*Less than (<) 75%*	*75 to 95%*	*Greater than (>) 90%*
Exits to Permanent Housing	Average percent of households served in TH that exit to permanent housing	*Less than (<) 70%*	*70 to 80%*	*Greater than (>) 80%*
Rapid Rehousing				

Length of Stay	Average number of days households remain in RRH	Longer than (>) 240 days	180 to 240 days	Less than (<) 180 days
Entries from Literal Homelessness	Average percent of households entering RRH that are unsheltered or in emergency shelter at project entry	Less than (>) 75%	75 to 90%	Greater than (<) 90%
Exits to Permanent Housing	Average percent of households served in RRH that exit to permanent housing	Less than (<) 70%	70 to 85%	Greater than (>) 85%
Permanent Supportive Housing				
Annual Unit Turnover	The percent of PSH units that become available during a year	Less than (>) 5 %	5 to 15%	Greater than (>) 15%
Utilization Rate	Average percent of PSH adult bed/family unit capacity that is used over the course of a year	Less than (>) 90%	90 to 95%	Greater than (<) 95%
Entries from Literal Homelessness	Average percent of households entering PSH that are unsheltered or in emergency shelter at project entry	Less than (<) 75%	75 to 90%	Greater than (>) 90%

6. Calculating the Baseline

Once all population, capacity, and performance inputs are entered, click the "Calculate Baseline" button. SPOC uses the data entered to generate a short description of the community and estimates the size of the homeless population after one year (assuming capacity and performance remain unchanged). SPOC also recommends potential system changes based on the population, capacity, and performance entered. If desired, you can change any population, capacity, or performance information and click "Calculate Baseline" again to see the estimated homeless population size with different parameters.

7. Trying System Changes

Select any of the grey "System Change Options" buttons to estimate how making that change will affect the size of your community's homeless population. The table below describes the system changes SPOC can model.

Change	Description
Improve Performance	Sets all performance measures to the best (right-most) option
Add/Expand Diversion	Assumes 35% of the unsheltered homeless population obtains housing without entering the homeless system
Add ES Inventory	Increases ES capacity by 15%
Add RRH Inventory	Increases RRH capacity by 15%
Add PSH Inventory	Increases available PSH capacity by 15%
Retool TH	Decreases TH length of stay to 30 days

SPOC will display the estimated size of the homeless population without change, as well as with the selected system change option. Each change is independent of the others; you can try all the changes, but only one can be applied at a given time. ***Please do not make changes to the population, capacity, or performance at this stage.***

8. Changing Community Data after Trying System Changes

To change the population, capacity, or performance after trying one or more system change options, first click "Reset Baseline." Then make any desired changes and click "Calculate Baseline" again. SPOC will display the estimated population size with the new data and you can try the system change options again. At any time, hitting the "Start Over" button will clear all of the entered data.

For more information about interpreting your community's SPOC results, please refer to the document titled "Are Your Results Different Than Expected? – Interpreting SPOC Results."