

2017 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT STANDARDS FOR COUNTING YOUTH FOR PENNSYLVANIA'S BALANCE OF STATE COCS

Youth (defined):

A household with no household members over age 24. A youth household includes:

- Children under age 18 who are living without a parent/guardian
- Unaccompanied individuals aged 24 and below
- Two or more individuals aged 24 or below living in a household with no other person over age 24
- Individuals aged 24 and below with their own children ("Parenting Youth")

STANDARDS FOR COUNTING YOUTH: EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL COUNTIES

1. Coordinate with other systems serving youth
2. Engage youth
3. Identify hot spots
4. Plan with safety in mind
5. Provide local training

1. Coordinate with one or more other systems serving youth. These include:

- Regional Coordinators of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH).
 - To find your Regional ECYEH Coordinator, visit http://homeless.center-school.org/providers/290/RegMap_160701.pdf
- School District Liaisons for Homeless Students.
 - To find the school district liaison for your geographic area, visit <http://homeless.center-school.org/HomelessDirectory/Search.aspx?page=liaison>
- Child welfare. This may include foster care, independent living specialists, etc.
 - <https://www.ilp.pitt.edu/ILDDirectory.htm>
- Juvenile or adult justice system. This may include parole/probation officers, etc.
- Behavioral health. This may include coordination with the child and adult MH system.
 - http://164.156.7.185/parecovery/documents/CASSP_Coordinators_Current.pdf
- Other organizations serving youth.
 - Some communities within our CoC have organizations and programs that specifically serve or target youth. These may include homeless assistance providers, Boys & Girls Clubs, LGBTQ organizations, etc.
 - See the *2017 Unsheltered Booklet* for examples of youth serving organizations.

2. Engage Youth

- Youth can assist and enhance your PIT efforts by:
 - identifying locations where youth experiencing housing challenges congregate;
 - identifying service locations utilized by youth;
 - providing volunteer training for interacting with youth;
 - participating in the count on the PIT date; etc.
- Focus groups may provide youth an opportunity to provide input on planning.
- The systems identified above and local homeless assistance providers are a good resource to help connect you with youth to invite to participate in the PIT count process.
 - While not a requirement, many communities have offered payment or other incentives to youth as compensation for their participation in the PIT.

3. Identify Youth Hot Spots

- In many communities, youth have been historically under-represented in their PIT count. It may be that youth gather, obtain services and/or sleep in locations other than those that have been previously targeted for the PIT count.
- Youth and/or the organizations that serve them may be able to enhance your PIT planning efforts by identifying *youth hot spots*, locations where youth experiencing housing challenges may gather and/or go to receive services.

4. Plan with Safety in Mind

- Precautions should be taken to ensure that participation in the PIT survey is voluntary and that the safety and privacy of youth are respected.
- Extra precautions about safety should be considered when identifying specific subpopulations of youth (such as LGBTQ). It may be helpful to hold focus groups with these youth at provider locations or drop-in centers where they already gather.
- If your community is hosting a “come and be counted” type of event, safety must be considered within the context of advertising for the event. Considerations include ensuring that youth know where to go, but stop short of informing the larger community about the date and time that vulnerable youth will be gathering.
 - Instead, the school district liaisons may be helpful in getting event information directly to youth experiencing housing challenges.

5. Provide Local Training: Language and Safety

- Many youth who lack a permanent housing arrangement do not self-identify as “homeless.” Additionally, youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstably housed are often not visually distinguishable from youth who are stably housed. For that reason the “introduction” on the PIT interview forms has been updated to indicate we are surveying people who are currently experiencing “housing challenges” rather than homelessness.
- Local training should include tips for approaching youth in order to ensure safety.

If you need assistance with meeting these minimum standards, please contact Diana T. Myers & Associates, Inc. (DMA) at pahomelesscount@dma-housing.com