



2022 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness:

Training for UNSHELTERED PIT Count (County Coordinators)

Eastern and Western PA Continuums of Care

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on behalf of the PA Department of Community
and Economic Development (DCED)

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Agenda

- PIT Count Overview
 - What's New for 2022
- Unsheltered Count Methodology
 - Street Based
 - Service Based
 - Locations
 - Observation only and Brief Survey Questions
- COVID-19 Considerations
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Greene County unsheltered count – Amy Switalski
- PIT Mobile App – Brendan Auman

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What is the PIT count?

A census or count of all people experiencing homelessness on a single night (i.e., at a given point in time), including some required demographic information and characteristics about those people, as defined in the annual HIC/PIT Data Collection Notice.

The PIT Count includes 3 parts:

- Housing Inventory Count
- Sheltered PIT
- **Unsheltered PIT**

HUD requires CoCs to conduct PIT counts of people experiencing homelessness.

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Who is counted in the unsheltered PIT count?



Unsheltered PIT includes persons residing in:

- Cars
- Parks
- Abandoned buildings
- Bus or train stations
- Airports
- Camping grounds
- Parking Lots

*persons residing in emergency shelters (including hotel/motel vouchers) and transitional housing are counted in the sheltered PIT count. Any person residing in one of these settings the night of the PIT count should NOT be counted in the unsheltered PIT count.

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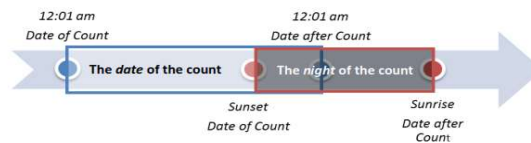
When is the PIT count conducted?



CoC program regulations require sheltered and unsheltered counts to be “conducted on one night in the last 10 calendar days of January.”

2022 PIT Count Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2022

This means the period of time from **Wednesday night Jan. 26th through Thursday morning Jan. 27th.**



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Overall PIT Timeline

Fall 2021: County-level planning meetings

December 8, 2021: Unsheltered PIT webinar **YOU ARE HERE!**

Late December 2021/Early January 2022: Unsheltered PIT interview form and volunteer training materials distributed

JANUARY 26, 2022: PIT COUNT DATE

February 16, 2022: All data due to DMA

February – March 2022: Data entry, checks for duplication, follow-up with questions

End of April: Submit all data to HUD (*the deadline is usually the end of April, but the CoC aims to submit by end of March*)

May 2022: County-level PIT reports distributed

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COVID-19 Considerations

HUD is not allowing any exemptions for the 2022 unsheltered PIT count due to COVID-19. The Eastern and Western PA CoCs must conduct an unsheltered count.

More info on later slides on COVID-19 precautions.

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What's new for the 2022 Unsheltered PIT?

- One unsheltered survey form (not multiple versions)
- In the observation only section:
No longer responding to race, ethnicity, and gender based on observation only. HUD advised in 2021 they do not want people entering this info based on observation only.
- Observation only section: Moved to end of survey (the default should be interviews whenever possible, so we moved this section to end to make that clearer)

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What's new for the 2022 Unsheltered PIT?

- Race, ethnicity, and gender questions on PIT survey updated to match 2022 HUD Data Standards
- Slightly reworded the mental health question on PIT survey based on feedback from providers (reworded from psychiatric or emotional condition to mental health condition)
- Enhanced guidance from HUD on COVID-19 safety precautions

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Unsheltered Count: Guiding Principles

- Safety
- Anonymity
- Each person counted
- Each person counted once

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Unsheltered Count – Methodologies



STREET-BASED COUNT



SERVICE-BASED COUNT

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Unsheltered **Street-Based** Count

- Seeking out people who are sleeping outside & other unsheltered locations
- May be conducted the night of Wednesday, January 26 and/or any time on Thursday, January 27
 - January 26: You will ask, “Where will you sleep tonight?”
 - January 27: You will ask, “Where did you sleep last tonight?”

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Unsheltered **Street-Based** Count

Count includes individuals sleeping
in these types of locations:

- Streets/sidewalks
- Vehicles
- Parks
- Hunting cabins
- Tents
- Campgrounds
- Barns
- Truck Stops
- Abandoned buildings
- Bus station/ transportation depots
- Chicken coops
- Railroad cars
- Storage units
- Lumberyards

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Unsheltered **Service-Based** Count

- Conducted at places providing services to persons experiencing homelessness
- **Must occur on Thursday, January 27, 2022**
 - You will ask, “Where did you sleep last night?”

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Unsheltered **Service-Based** Count

Examples of service-based locations include:

- soup kitchens
- food pantries
- health care clinics
- service agencies
- public libraries
- other

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Unsheltered Count: Locations

Unsheltered Count DOES NOT include individuals living in these locations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ◦ Hotels/motels not funded through public/ charitable resources | ◦ Recovery houses |
| ◦ Shelters, transitional, or permanent homeless programs | ◦ Residential/medical facilities |
| ◦ Jails/prison | ◦ Youth in custody of state in foster care or other out-of-home placement |
| ◦ Emergency rooms/ hospitals | ◦ Doubled up in the homes of family/friends |
| ◦ Halfway houses | |

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Unsheltered Count: Locations

HUD has provided new guidance on ambiguous sleeping locations:

- 1) People living in tents, sprung shelters, cars, trucks and vans are never to be considered housed.
- 2) People living in RVs are considered housed if they are regularly connected to water, sewer and utilities or a septic system, well and generator, meet local codes, and the household owns or rents the RV and the land upon which it is located.
- 3) Residents of tiny homes and sheds are considered housed if the home meets local codes and contains a toilet, shower, kitchen, sleeping and living space, and is connected to water, sewer and utilities. The household must either own or rent the land and unit. The unit must also have climate control if located in very cold and very hot climates (regular seasonal patterns fall below 32 degrees or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit).

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What methodology will work best in your county (street-based, service-based, or a combo)?

- This is a local decision (up to each county). *Your role as the coordinator is to determine the methodology with your community and communicate this to volunteers.*
- If your county has a known unsheltered population, a street-based count is likely the best option (possibly combined with service-based)
- If your county does not have a known unsheltered population, a street-based count in hot spots only plus a service-based count may be best.

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Unsheltered Count – Who?

All household types are included:

- Households with children
- Households without children
 - Couples- married and unmarried
 - Single individuals
 - Other makeups where the persons define themselves as a household (intergenerational households of adults, siblings, etc.) and there are no children
- Youth
 - unaccompanied children < age 18
 - unaccompanied youth, 18-24
 - parenting youth

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Unsheltered Count – How?

Unsheltered PIT surveys are conducted either via:

- Brief Interviews
- Observation Only (*use only when necessary*)

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Unsheltered Count – How?

1. **Brief interviews** – preferred

- Complete one Interview Form for each household
- If a household has more than five members please record additional data on a second form, clearly indicating that they are part of same household
- If a household includes more than one person, please ensure that data is recorded on the form consistently recording the data based on the assigned “person #”.
 - e.g. If LH is person # 1 and BH is person # 2 on page 2, please ensure that BH is also person # 2 on the subsequent pages.

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Unsheltered Count – How?

- ### 2. **Observation** - If someone will not or cannot provide the information requested on the Interview Form, complete the box at end of survey based on your observation.

County Coordinators: The observation only section is where we tend to see incomplete information and errors. **Please make sure your volunteers fill out the ENTIRE section (double check forms the night/day of the count).** Without all the information, we may have to exclude a survey (or reach out to you for more info).

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Brief surveys

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Brief Surveys: What information are we collecting?

- Number of persons in household
- For each person in household:
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Race
- Additional data collected for adults or youth under 18 who are head of household:
 - Number of homeless episodes and length of time homeless
 - Domestic violence status (not asked in front of two adults who have identified that they are part of the same household)
 - Veteran status
 - Disability information

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Brief Survey Instructions

- Initials only, no name
- Age – Estimate if person does not reveal
- Gender, ethnicity, and race – Read the lists out loud and have the person self-identify their response. Please do not assume a response

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Unsheltered Interviews – Brief Survey Count

- Ask all questions as written on the Interview Form or within the Mobile App.
- Inform participants participation is voluntary. Individuals may refuse to answer some or all questions.
- Refusal to participate will not result in a denial of shelter, service, or other assistance.
- If a household/individual does not want to provide the requested information, please complete an observation only count.
- If person refuses to give initials, assign initials and complete rest of interview.

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Observation only

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Unsheltered Count – Observation Only

Observation Only Section

OBSERVATION ONLY. Interviewer: If you are unable to survey an individual/household that you believe to be experiencing homelessness, because individual/household is asleep or is unable or unwilling to be interviewed or to complete the full interview, please provide the following information to the best of your ability based on what you can observe for each person within the household. (Each household should be submitted as a separate survey.)

- **# adults in Household:** _____
 - Estimated age of adults: # age 18-24 = _____ # age 25-59 = _____ # age 60+ = _____

- **# children (under age 18) in Household:** _____
- **Details as to how you know/why you believe this household is unsheltered (REQUIRED):** _____



- **Description of location, clothing and any other details that would help to ensure this household is only counted once (please be as specific as possible) (REQUIRED):** _____

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Unsheltered Count: Observation Only

When to conduct count by observation only

- Observation only count must be conducted the **night** of January 26 or early morning of January 27.
- Individual/household is asleep/bedded down (*need to write this on the form*)
- Individual/household is unwilling to be interviewed/complete the full interview, but you believe them to be experiencing homelessness (*need to write the details on the form*).
 - E.g., on a park bench outside in winter with all of their belongings
 - E.g., the individual is known to you and your team

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Unsheltered Count: Observation Only

Write down as much detail as possible that helps to make the person identifiable and to provide clues on their housing status.

- What is the person **wearing**? (e.g., “black beanie, navy sweatshirt, jeans, and tan utility boots.” or “bundled in a grey, puffy sleeping bag that covered their face.”)
- What does the person **look like**? (e.g., “shoulder-length grey hair, white, female, 50-60 years old”)
- **Why** were you unable to complete a survey with them? (e.g., “They said they did not want to complete a survey, but they were awake.”)
- **Where** did you see them? (e.g., “In front of the TD bank at the corner of 6th and Cedar St.”)
- What makes you think that they are or may be **experiencing homelessness**? (e.g., “They were sleeping on a park bench with a large bag of their belongings next to them.”)

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Unsheltered Count: Observation Only

When is an observational survey NOT appropriate?

- "I saw a man in a red sweatshirt riding by on a bike by that looked homeless."
- Dunkin Donuts said there is a man who hangs out sometimes who is homeless.

Why not appropriate?

- Not enough detail (age, appearance, location, details of why you believe they are experiencing homelessness)
- If we have more information, the unsheltered coordinator can work to make sure they were not counted by another team or an emergency shelter
- Third party reports are not appropriate to include in the PIT count. The person must be counted/observed by your team.

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Walk through PIT form updates

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COVID-19 Considerations

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HUD's COVID-19 Safety Guidance

- **Vaccination:** CoCs should encourage all people involved in counting to be fully vaccinated to participate in the PIT count. A CoC can choose to allow people to count who are not fully vaccinated but should follow health precautions/safety procedures.
- **Testing:** CoCs should recommend that any volunteer be tested for COVID-19 prior to participation in the count no more than 7 days prior
- **Symptoms:** CoCs should encourage volunteers to stay home if they have any symptoms and plan for volunteer absences. CoCs should also recommend volunteers observe for symptoms for up to 14 days after the count and consider getting tested for COVID-19.

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HUD's COVID-19 Safety Guidance

- **PPE:** CoCs should ask all volunteers to bring masks and wear them for the duration of the count and other volunteer efforts. CoCs should be prepared to provide masks to all volunteers as well as hand sanitizer. HUD recommends that all volunteers conducting the count bring masks to provide to those they are interviewing.
- **Social Distancing:** CoCs should create small counting teams, with only two or three volunteers per team. These teams should maintain at least six feet from one another if at all possible as well as people experiencing homelessness.

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HUD's COVID-19 Safety Guidance

- **Volunteers:** HUD discourages CoCs from using volunteers that are at high risk of contracting COVID-19, including persons age 65 or older, to physically count. If your CoC has people that want to volunteer but are in a high-risk group, HUD encourages you to determine if there are other ways to use their services that minimize their exposure (e.g., entering data from surveys collected), or to politely decline their assistance this year.
- **Remote PIT Count Training:** To limit social interactions, HUD recommends that CoCs maximize use of remote training options.
 - DMA will provide a training PPT and recording that can be provided to volunteers. Coordinators can add county-specific content.
- **Mobile app:** Mobile technology can reduce physical interaction.

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Roles and responsibilities

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Who will conduct the Unsheltered PIT Count in your county?

- This is a local decision (up to each county).
- You may choose to conduct the count with only homeless service provider staff.
- You may choose to engage a small number of volunteers.
- COVID-19 safety precautions must be followed (more on next slide).

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Role: County Unsheltered PIT Coordinator

KEY ROLES:

- **Select method and timing of conducting the count**
 - Street based count
 - Service based count
 - Combination
- **Identify who in your community will participate in the count (homeless service provider staff, community volunteers)**
- **Provide volunteer training**
 - Required by HUD
 - Must be done immediately prior to count (no more than a week prior)
 - Power Point training slides/recording provided by DMA
- **Decide if you will use PIT mobile app or paper forms**

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Role: County Unsheltered PIT Coordinator

Tasks of the coordinator, in partnership with volunteer committee*, may include:

- Outreach to youth serving orgs, school district homeless liaisons, veteran serving orgs, etc.*
- Notification of police, first responders, etc.*
- Media publicity*
- Volunteer recruiting; Determining volunteer or staff assignments
- Communicating with volunteers/staff prior to the PIT so they know what to expect, bring, etc.
- Map out which teams will count specific areas, to prevent overlap/duplication
- Provide app instructions, if relevant
- Coordinate with CES Regional Manager/local CE centers
- Soliciting donations for incentive/care packages; Assembling care packages*
- Developing a transportation plan (Are persons offered hotel/motel voucher and/or transportation to emergency shelter?)
- Collecting supplies – clipboards, pens, flashlights, etc.
- Ensuring sufficient copies of Interview Forms
- Designating drop-off location or person for all Interview Forms

*coordinators should determine if these tasks make sense based on how you are structuring your count

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Standards for Counting Youth

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL COUNTIES:

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

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Standards for Counting Youth

- **East:**
 - A small committee is currently working on strategies to enhance youth counting/engagement in the Eastern PA CoC.
 - **The committee would like to add a few supplemental questions to the existing survey about youth homelessness. DMA will be reaching out to coordinators about this -- if you would be willing to pilot, please let DMA know!**
 - We have 4 counties already on board.
 - Would like to target counties with highest numbers of youth (Blair, Centre, Cumberland, Franklin, Lehigh, Lycoming, Monroe, Northampton, Schuylkill)
- **Western PA CoC:**
 - In addition to the January PIT Count, the Western PA CoC is planning a youth-specific count for later in 2022.

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Role/After the Count: County Unsheltered PIT Coordinator

Role of the Unsheltered County Coordinator

By February 16, 2022:

- Submit all Interview Forms (one per counted household), if completing surveys on paper
- If completing surveys via mobile app, surveys will be submitted in real time.
- Complete and submit the County Summary Form (required whether you used paper surveys or app)
 - The number of homeless households reported on the Summary Form must equal the number of Interview Forms (DMA will follow up if there are discrepancies)

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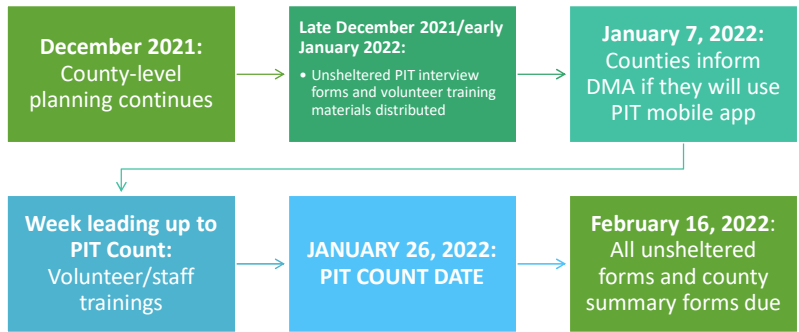
ArcGIS Survey123 Mobile App

- Counties have the option to complete their surveys using the PIT mobile app.
- Counties should let DMA know if they are interested in using the PIT mobile app by Friday, January 7th (we will send a reminder)

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Next Steps



Greene County Unsheltered PIT

AMY SWITALSKI

PIT Mobile App

BRENDAN AUMAN

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Contact Information

Jessica Sones or other DMA staff –

- pahomelesscount@dma-housing.com
- (215) 576-1558

CoC PIT Count website:

<https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/2022-point-time-pit-count>

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