2023 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)

Agenda

- PIT Count Overview
  - What's New for 2023
- Unsheltered Count Methodology
  - Street Based
  - Service Based
  - Locations
  - Brief Surveys vs. Observation Only
- COVID-19 Considerations
- Roles and Responsibilities
- PIT Mobile App
- Schuylkill County unsheltered count
- Knowledge Sharing

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.

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.
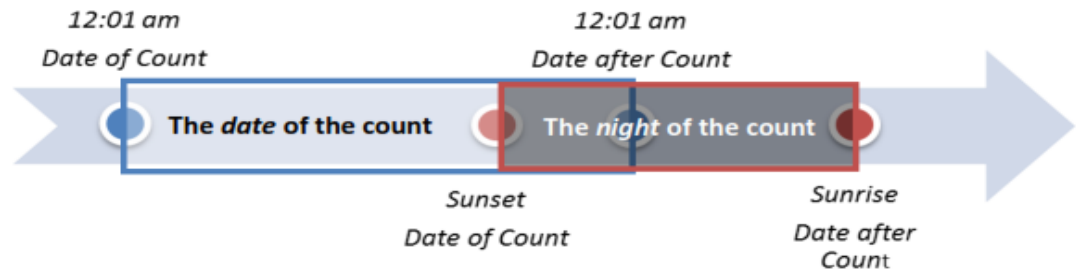
When is the PIT count conducted?

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

2023 PIT Count Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023

This means the period of time from **Wednesday night Jan. 25th through Thursday morning Jan. 26th**.

12:01 am
Date of Count

12:01 am
Date after Count

The *date* of the count

The *night* of the count

Sunset
Date of Count

Sunrise
Date after Count

Overall PIT Timeline

Fall 2022: County-level planning meetings

November 29, 2022: Unsheltered PIT webinar **YOU ARE HERE!**

Late December 2022/Early January 2023: Unsheltered PIT interview form and volunteer training materials distributed

JANUARY 25, 2023: PIT COUNT DATE

February 15, 2023: All data due to DMA

February – March 2023: 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 2023: County-level PIT reports distributed

What's new for the 2023 Unsheltered PIT?

New age categories for PIT reporting

- Under age 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and older

Stipends available for persons with lived experience to participate in PIT Count

- $15/hr
- Multiple payment methods

Unsheltered Count: Guiding Principles

◦ Safety
◦ Anonymity
◦ Each person counted
◦ Each person counted once

Unsheltered Count – Methodologies

STREET-BASED COUNT

SERVICE-BASED COUNT

Unsheltered **Street-Based** Count

◦ Seeking out people who are sleeping outside & other unsheltered locations

◦ May be conducted the night of Wednesday, January 25 and/or any time on Thursday, January 26

  ◦ January 25: You will ask, "Where <u>will</u> you sleep tonight?"

  ◦ January 26: You will ask, "Where <u>did</u> you sleep <u>last</u> tonight?"

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

Unsheltered **Service-Based** Count

◦ Conducted at places providing services to persons experiencing homelessness

◦ **Must occur on Thursday, January 26, 2023**

  ◦ You will ask, "Where **did** you sleep **last** night?"

Unsheltered **Service-Based** Count

Examples of service-based locations include:

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

Unsheltered Count: Locations

Unsheltered Count <u>DOES NOT</u> include individuals living in these locations:

- Hotels/motels not funded through public/ charitable resources
- Shelters, transitional, or permanent homeless programs
- Jails/prison
- Emergency rooms/ hospitals
- Halfway houses

- Recovery houses
- Residential/medical facilities
- Youth in custody of state in foster care or other out-of-home placement
- Doubled up in the homes of family/friends

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).

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.

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

Unsheltered Count – How?

Unsheltered PIT surveys are conducted either via:

◦ Brief Interviews

◦ Observation Only *(use only when necessary)*

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.

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).

Brief surveys

Brief Surveys: What information are we collecting?

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

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

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.

Observation only

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): _____
  _____
  _____

MUST fill out details and description sections. Without enough information sometimes we have to exclude the survey and not count the individual.

Unsheltered Count: Observation Only

When to conduct count by observation only

◦ Observation only count must be conducted the **night** of January 25 or early morning of January 26.

◦ 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

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.")

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.

Unsheltered Count: Observation Only

We need help from county coordinators to ensure the observation only section is filled out properly. If we do not have details about the sleeping location and details to help ensure the household is only counted once, we often must exclude the survey.

COVID-19 Considerations

HUD's COVID-19 Safety Guidance

◦ **CoCs should practice precautions related to COVID-19. This may include:**

  ◦ Testing – recommending volunteers be tested prior to count

  ◦ Symptoms – encourage volunteers to stay home if they have symptoms

  ◦ PPE

  ◦ Social Distancing

  ◦ Vaccination

  ◦ Remote Training

  ◦ Mobile App

Roles and responsibilities

Who will conduct the Unsheltered PIT Count in your county?

◦ This is a local decision (up to each county). This will largely depend on size of your county, number of persons exp. homelessness typically identified via the PIT, etc.

◦ You may choose to engage community volunteers.

◦ You may choose to conduct the count with only homeless service provider staff.

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**
- **Night/day of PIT logistics**
- **Ensure surveys are completely accurately and submitted to DMA**

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

Standards for Counting Youth

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL COUNTIES:

- Coordinate with other systems that serve youth
- Engage youth
- Identify hot spots
- Plan with safety in mind
- Provide local training

Role/After the Count: County Unsheltered PIT Coordinator

Role of the Unsheltered County Coordinator

By February 15, 2023:

o Submit all Interview Forms (one per counted household), if completing surveys on paper. **Many Coordinators choose to do a review of all survey forms before completion to make sure they are accurate and complete.**
o If completing surveys via mobile app, surveys will be submitted in real time.
o Complete and submit the County Summary Form (required whether you used paper surveys or app)
   o 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)

PIT Mobile App

ArcGIS Survey123 Mobile App

o Counties have the option to complete their surveys using the PIT mobile app.

o **NEW THIS YEAR** – if you want to use a mix of paper surveys and mobile app, that is OK. For example- one team uses mobile app and one uses paper surveys.

  o Only one survey per household (either paper or mobile app).

ArcGIS Survey123 Mobile App

o   You can download the Survey123 field app on a device via Apple Store or Google Play store.

o   If you download the Survey123 field app and are out of cellular service area when conducting count, you can still capture the survey information and submit later when you are in service area.

o   You can also use the survey in a computer browser, but functions work better in the app.

ArcGIS Survey123 Mobile App

o You can test out survey in advance if you want to see how it works: https://arcg.is/159nvu0

Schuylkill County Unsheltered PIT

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

JAMBOARD

Resource Folder

We would like to create an online folder of resources used for the unsheltered PIT in different counties.

For example, last year Greene County shared the template they use to reach out to community partners.

If you have any resources to share, please email them to pahomelesscount@dma-housing.com.

Contact Information

Jessica Sones or other DMA staff –

- pahomelesscount@dma-housing.com (fastest way to reach us)
- (215) 576-1558

CoC PIT Count website:

- https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/2023-point-time-pit-count
- All PIT materials will be posted here