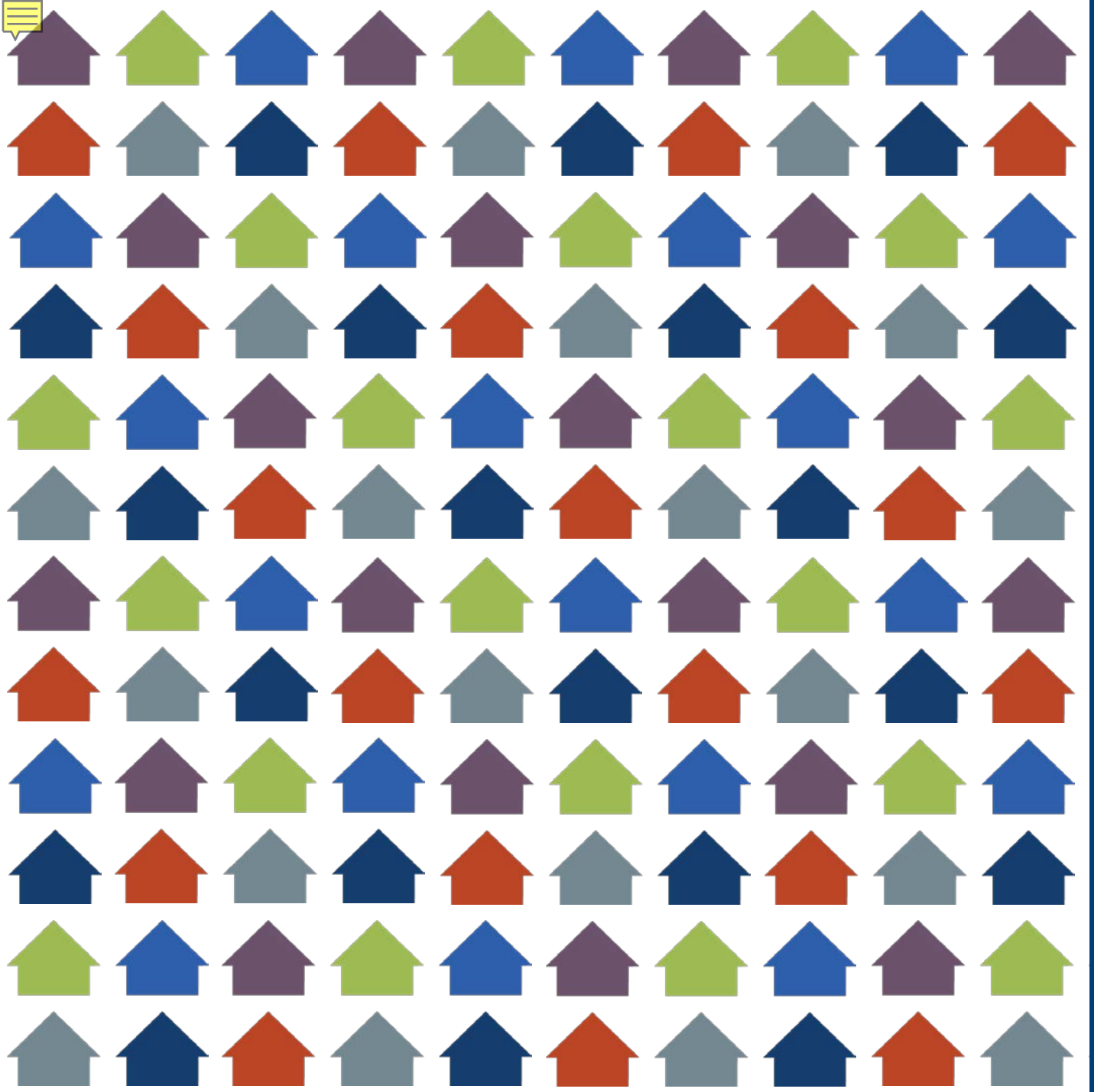


THN
TEXAS HOMELESS NETWORK

Point-In-Time Count: Volunteer Training

Strategies For Change

thn.org

Agenda

- PIT Overview
- PIT Methodology
- Unsheltered PIT Count
- Sheltered PIT Count
- Volunteer Prep
- Counting Us App
- Q&A

PIT Date

January 23rd, 2020

What is a Point-In-Time Count (PIT)?

- A snapshot of how many homeless individuals are in your community on a single day.
- On the local level, point-in-time counts help communities plan services and programs to appropriately address local needs, measure progress in decreasing homelessness, and identify strengths and gaps in a community's current homelessness assistance system.

PIT Background – Why we count

FUNDING

- Eligibility to apply for/ receive CoC funds from HUD

EXTENT

- Trends of homelessness in the local area
- Characteristics of those experiencing homelessness
- New programs

AWARENESS

- Raise community awareness
- Raise political awareness

SUCCESSFUL PIT COUNT

WHO TO COUNT

Individuals & Families Living In:

- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing
- Domestic Violence Shelter
- Hotel/Motel paid for by an organization
- Places not meant for human habitation

WHO NOT TO COUNT

Individuals & Families Living In:

- Doubled-up situations
- Substandard housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing program
- Rapid Re-housing program
- Hotel/Motel paid for with own funds
- Locations using HUD-VASH vouchers
- Shelters designed for foster care or DFPS children

Unsheltered PIT Count

The unsheltered PIT survey requires volunteers to identify homeless people that are living in places not meant for human habitation, such as:

- On the street
- In abandoned buildings
- In their vehicles
- In tents/shanties
- Public parks
- In the woods
- Transportation stations

Unsheltered PIT – Survey Steps

There are **five** steps to completing an unsheltered PIT count survey. As an unsheltered volunteer you should:

1. Identify yourself, engage potential participants and explain the purpose of the count.
2. Deliver the script and the consent process. Obtain verbal consent to proceed.
3. Ask the screening questions. Determine if the individual is eligible.
   - Has anyone asked you questions about experiencing homelessness?
   - Where are you sleeping tonight?
4. If eligible, administer the survey questions, recording the participant's responses. If ineligible, thank them for their time and move on.
5. Thank the respondent for their participation. If possible, provide the participant with donated items.

Unsheltered PIT – Sample Script

Hello, my name is _____, and I am helping _____conduct a short survey of our community. We would like to learn more about people experiencing homelessness, what kinds of problems they face, and to see what services are needed to address homelessness.

Your participation is strictly voluntary, and all of your responses are confidential. Your privacy will be protected and respected. If questions make you uncomfortable you do not have to answer them. Would you be willing to take a few minutes to answer some questions?

Sheltered PIT Count

- HUD defines sheltered homeless persons as adults, children, and unaccompanied youths who, on the night of the count, are living in shelters for the homeless.
- Regardless of funding source, **all** providers of shelter, vouchers, or funds for shelters (including motel/hotel rooms), and/or transitional housing need to provide unduplicated information about the individuals and families on January 24th, 2019.
- For Emergency Shelters, you should conduct the surveys in the late afternoon/evening **when participants are checking in to stay the night**.

Sheltered PIT – Who do you count?

You should count:

- Emergency Shelters
- Domestic violence shelters
- Hotel, motel, or apartment vouchers paid for by a public or private agency because the individual or family is homeless
- Transitional Housing

You should NOT count:

- Persons living doubled up in conventional housing;
- Formerly homeless persons living in Section 8 SRO, Shelter Plus Care, Supportive Housing Program permanent housing or other permanent housing units;
- Persons living in conventional housing and receiving temporary assistance (Rapid Rehousing or Homelessness Prevention) from a program funded by the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP);
- Children or youth, who because of their own or a parent's homelessness or abandonment now reside temporarily or for a short anticipated duration in hospitals, residential treatment facilities, emergency foster care, or detention facilities;
- Adults in mental health facilities, chemical dependency facilities, or criminal justice facilities.

Unsheltered And Sheltered Counts

Do's

- If you have obtained consent

Don'ts

- Do not complete a survey without consent
- Do not continue the survey if the individual has expressed the desire to end the survey
- Do not complete a survey based on an intake form unless you have specifically obtained consent to do so.

Observation PIT Count

- This survey requires NO direct interaction and is used mostly as a head count
- Reasons why you would conduct an Observation survey:
  - The individual is sleeping
  - Refused to take the survey
  - If you do not feel comfortable approaching the participant

Observation Survey

Do's

- Someone is sleeping
- You do not feel comfortable going to a certain area
- A person did not give their consent to participate in the survey or they don't want to complete the survey in it's entirety
- Someone does not seem to understand the consent process and cannot reasonably consent to the survey.

Don'ts

- Do not fill out an observation survey if you have not laid eyes on the individual that day

PIT Volunteer Prep and Forms

- Download and register an account with the Counting Us App
  - Practice entering surveys using code: **TX2020**
  - Don't be afraid to make mistakes, this is all test data!
- Review the survey and become comfortable with the questions
- Talk to your PIT lead about any concerns prior or on the day of the count

Safety

Do

- ✓ Always work in teams
- ✓ Be respectful of space
- ✓ Ask a person to participate if you think they are homeless
- ✓ Introduce yourself and explain what you are doing
- ✓ Be sincere and caring
- ✓ Know how to de-escalate
- ✓ Know emergency numbers
- ✓ Honor requests to not participate
- ✓ Provide shelter information if possible
- ✓ Dress appropriately
- ✓ Leave valuables behind

Don't

- ✓ Wake up someone
- ✓ Approach if you don't feel comfortable
- ✓ Mandate participation
- ✓ Invade personal space
- ✓ Promise anything you can't deliver
- ✓ Be judgmental
- ✓ Give money or offer rides
- ✓ Share any confidential info or photos of participants
- ✓ Panic
- ✓ Put anyone in danger
- ✓ Deviate from the survey

Best Practices

- Familiarize yourself with the survey
- Communicate your intentions to prospective survey participants
- Obtain consent to administer the survey
- Express confidence and compassion
- When surveying individuals in a group, prioritize safety and protect participant's information
- Come up with a safety phrase for discomfort amongst your team
- Know volunteer expectations
- Know community resources
- Contact PIT Lead if any issues arise

Checklist

Items to bring with you:

- Comfortable clothes and shoes
- Fully charged cell phone (portable charger if possible)
- Flashlight (if conducting count at night or early morning)
- Pen and notepad
- Vehicle if necessary
- “Goodie bags” to pass out if provided

Volunteer Hour Tracker

ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST FILL OUT ONLINE FORM!

Please have volunteers fill out on the day of the count after completing their shift

Counting Us App

What you need– Prep and Forms

- **Download and register an account with the Counting Us App**
  - Practice entering surveys using code: **TX2020**
    - Don't be afraid to make mistakes, it is all test data before 1/23/20!
  - Make sure you have a full battery!
- **Review the survey and become comfortable with asking the questions**
  - Volunteer Interviewing Guide
- **Talk to your PIT lead about any concerns prior or on the day of the count**
  - It is important, especially on the day of the count, to inform your PIT lead of any issues immediately

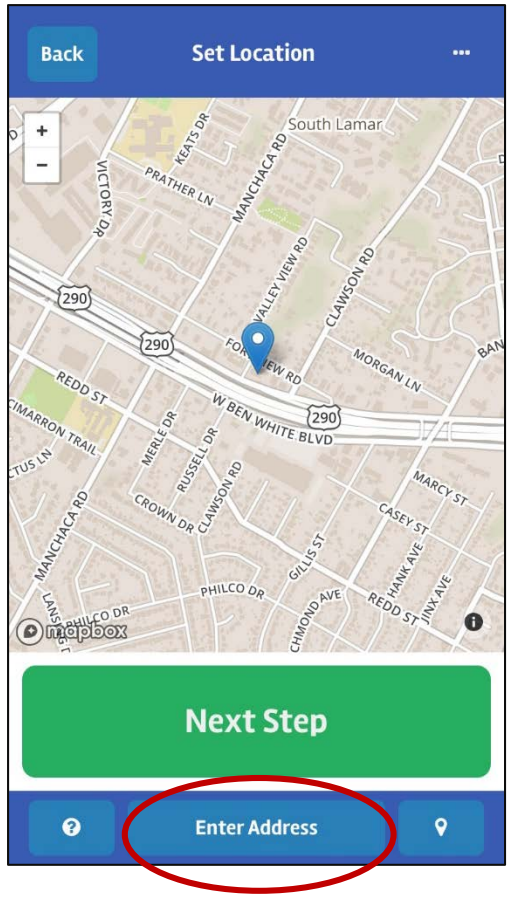
Day of Count Set-Up Key

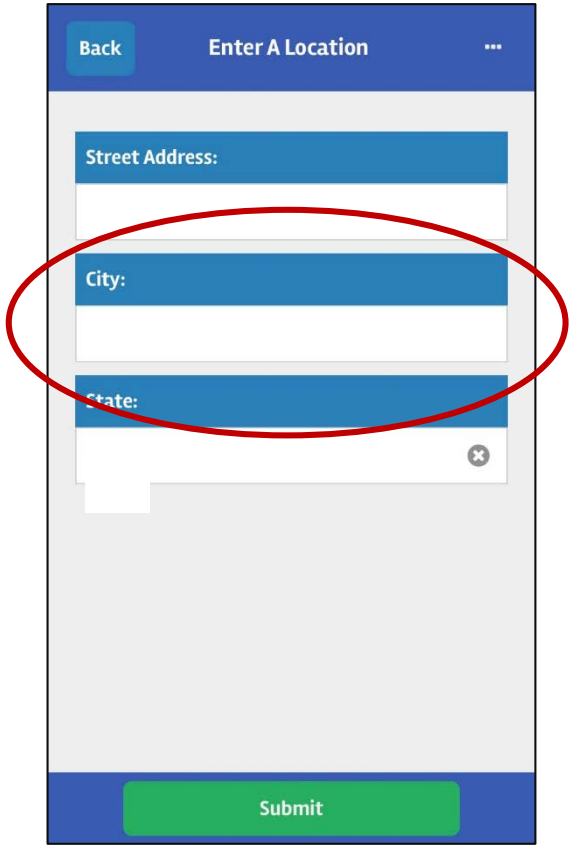
MAKE SURE ON THE DAY OF THE COUNT ALL SURVEYS ARE COLLECTED UNDER SET-UP KEY…

TX2020

DV Survivors and Surveys

- Use Counting Us App
- On geo-location screen, click “Enter Address” button and **ONLY** enter in City and State information
- **DO NOT** enter in first or last name
- For date of birth information **ONLY** enter in age range





Register for the Count

- Click here
- Go online to THN's website

Data->Point-in-Time Reports->Winter Training Materials->Volunteer Materials->Registration and Release Form

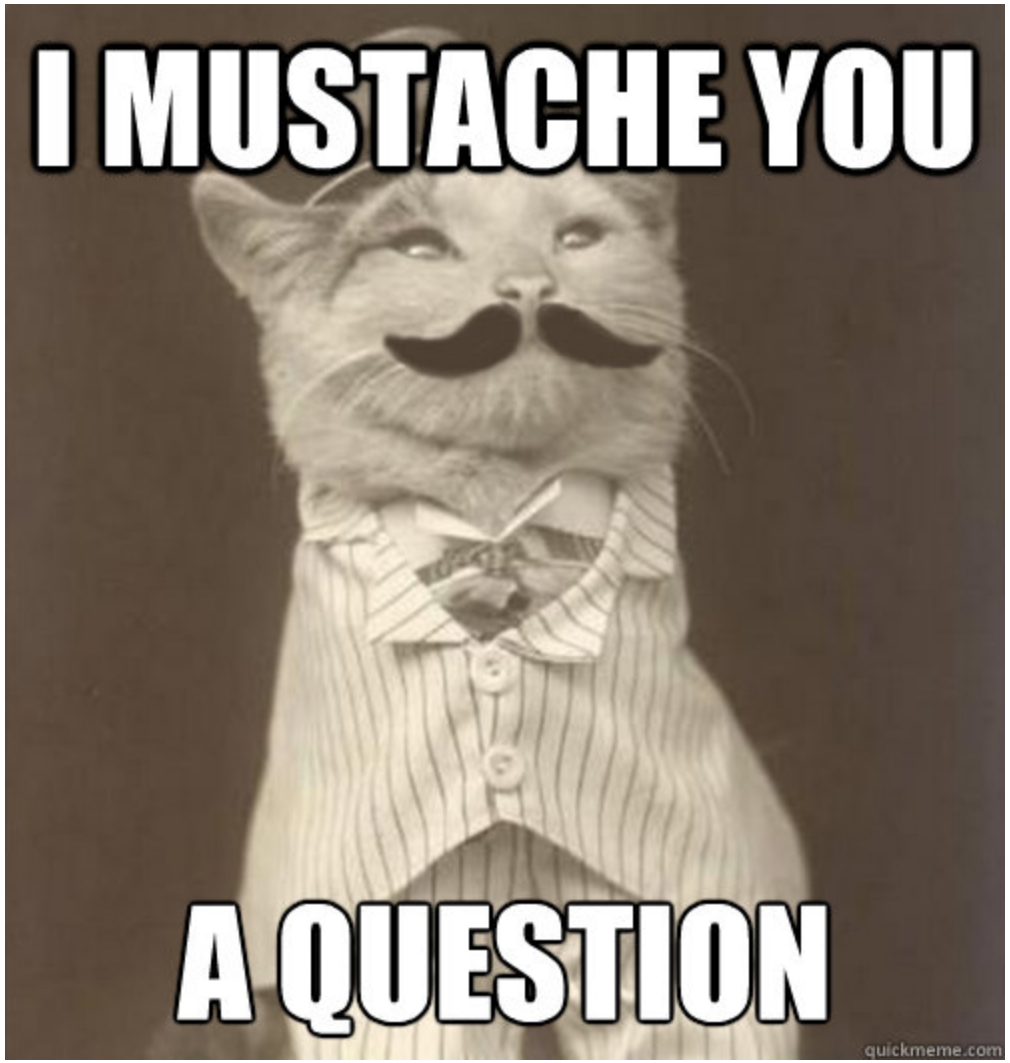
Complete registration ASAP!

Next Steps!

1. Register for the Count
2. Complete the PIT Quiz on Google Forms (link on next slide)
3. Work with your PIT Lead to develop a strategy and game plan for where you will count on 1/23/20.
4. Check out the Volunteer Materials on THN's website

DON'T FORGET!

Please submit the Volunteer Hour Tracker form online by **1/30/20**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A QUESTION
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THANK YOU!!!