
The Annual Point in Time Count: What Works and How to Make it More Effective in your Community

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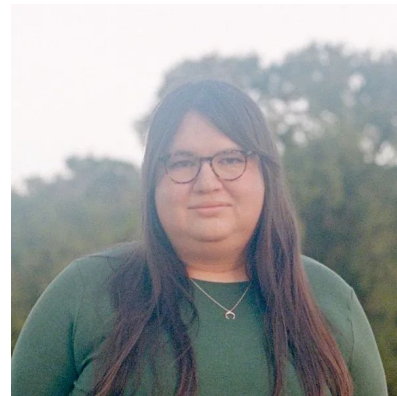
Presenters



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What is the Point in Time (PIT) Count?

- A literal count of all the people experiencing homelessness in your Continuum of Care (CoC) on a single night
- A HUD requirement that every CoC conduct a PIT count in the last 10 days of January at least every other year
- A “snapshot” of homelessness on this one night in your community- it is likely a underrepresentation of the number of people experiencing homelessness in your CoC

Why is it important for your CoC to do a PIT count?

- To measure and monitor trends and changes in homelessness locally
- To help your community understand what resources you need and strategize the best ways to use them to end homelessness
- Raise community awareness around homelessness
- HUD requires it in order to receive funding!

What the PIT Count Can Tell your CoC

- How many people were counted as experiencing homelessness on a single night within the last 10 days of January (and any other night your community performed one, if you do it biannually)
- Often the most comprehensive count of people in unsheltered locations for a community
- Often the most comprehensive count of people served by Victim Services Providers (VSPs) for a community
- Can be the most comprehensive count of people served in Emergency Shelter if there is a large % of shelters or people in shelters that are served by non-HMIS providers
- Demographic breakdown of people counted as experiencing homelessness on a single night within the last 10 days of January (race, ethnicity, household type, disabling conditions, chronic homeless status, fleeing domestic violence)

What the PIT Count Can't Tell Your CoC

- How many people experience homelessness in the community in any given time frame longer than that night
- How is the homeless response system serving people/households (system performance)
- How many people were experiencing homelessness on the night of the PIT that we couldn't find to count
- How many people were experiencing homelessness on the night of the PIT who refused to be counted (depending on methodology)
- Intersectionality of demographic information of people counted as experiencing homelessness on a single night within the last 10 days of January (i.e. number of female-headed households with children in shelter and fleeing domestic violence)
- How many people are experiencing homelessness right now or over the course of a year

When to Use PIT Count Data

- When you need a "simple" reference point about homelessness in the community
- This count should come with a lot of context about what it is and what it is not
- Also include any caveats around geographic coverage for unsheltered count, methodology, etc.

TX PIT Count

How We Do the PIT Count in the BoS

- Data and Engagement Coordinator (THN)
- Local Leads (from the community)
- PIT Committees (formed by PIT Leads)
- Local Volunteer Teams (recruited from the community)



Educating and Preparing Volunteers

- Conduct comprehensive trainings
 - Meet people where they are at, they may not be directly involved in the social services and social work sector like us
 - Train on both general subjects for surveying as well as any applications used to gather data
- Practice Practice Practice!
 - Practice introduction scripts
 - Practice saying survey questions out loud
- Discuss common myths and misconceptions with volunteers
- Discuss safety considerations



General Tips for Surveyors

- Never sneak up for startle people, make your presence known with a non-threatening greeting
- Do your best to not wake people up
- Maintain eye contact, get on people's level so they do not feel threatened
- Let participants see the survey questions
- If you are a direct service worker, consider asking if the participant would like a follow up conversation



General Tips for Surveyors

- Ask all the questions on the survey if possible
 - Never make folks feel like they absolutely have to answer all the questions
- Be trauma informed
- Ask questions as written
- Thank people for their time and willingness to participate
- Get consent to administer the survey
 - If consent is revoked, stop the survey



Surveying Survivors

- Surveying survivors requires extra safety and confidentiality precautions
- Consider having a separate VSP survey for domestic violence shelters
- Train volunteers to not gather identifying information from survivors
- Assure survivors that all identifying information is removed before it is released to the public
 - Follow through and de-identify survivor's data



Surveying Youth

- Have a youth liaison, youth leadership team, or youth PIT count coordinator
- Partner with youth service community
- Count in locations where youth experiencing homelessness gather
- Address the stigma of homelessness
- Use social media
- Be flexible!!!



Surveying Veterans

- Partner with the VA
- Partner with Veteran Service Organizations
- Involve formerly homeless veterans in your PIT count
- Know the resources in your community for Veterans



Safety Considerations- Do

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



Safety Considerations- Don't

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



Collaborating with People with Lived Experience of Homelessness

- Collaborating with People with Lived Experience (PLE) is one of the other most important steps you can take to having a successful PIT count
- Should ALWAYS be a part of your PIT committee
- Can be useful as surveyors or team leads
- Should be compensated with money



What have People with Lived Experience Told BoS

- Keep question wording simple
- Never pressure people into answering
- Use the PIT as an opportunity to form rapport
- Incentives!

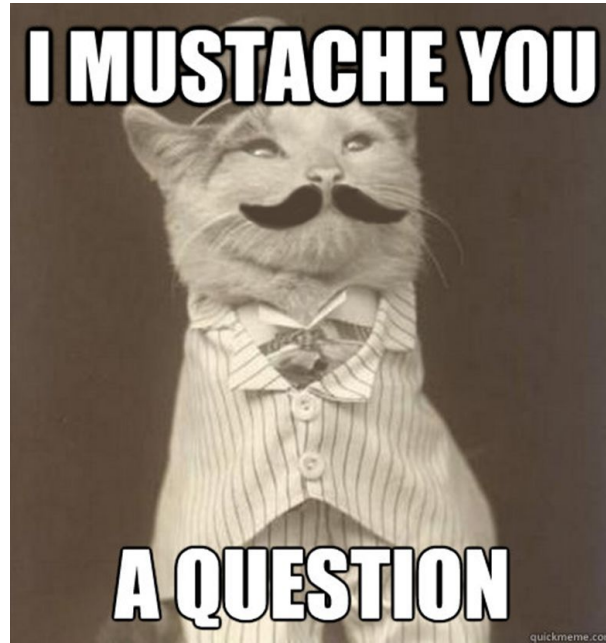


Discussion Time!

Let's discuss!

- What unique partners have you worked with in past PIT Counts?
- What tips and tricks do you have for effective volunteer recruitment?
- How have you incorporated people with lived experience of homelessness into your PIT Count planning or day of count?
- Do you incorporate law enforcement into your PIT Count? If so, how do you ensure the interactions are trauma-informed?
- Do you change the methodology or the PIT count survey for subpopulations?
- How do you use your PIT Count data?
 - Do you use the PIT Count for any general messaging or to raise awareness in your community?

Questions?



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Contact Information

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Thank you!

Strategies For Change

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