2024 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT COC AND PIT LEAD ADMINISTRATION GUIDE

CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is intended to be a near-comprehensive resource for the process, tools, and materials available to Continuum of Care Coordinators and local PIT leads in Minnesota. The primary audience is NOT surveyors who interview respondents, but those charged with overseeing the coordination of local PIT efforts, ensuring surveys are submitted, and ultimately submitting PIT data to HUD.

PIT TOOL CHANGES IN 2024

- PIT LIVE data review process
- PIT LIVE surveys and aggregate tool updated to reflect HUD race, ethnicity, and gender requirements
- Aggregate collection – no longer a form, rather a table

PLANNING & TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS – KNOW YOUR POSITION AND TRAIN EXPLICITLY

As you prepare and conduct local training for the PIT count, we recommend you have a position in these areas and train on them expressly.

Do you require your surveyors to rehearse in advance of administering the survey? We recommend all PIT training include a rehearsal component. You may want to provide several scenarios they are likely to encounter so surveyors feel confident on PIT night.

Do you have resources to hand out at time of survey? The survey includes prompts for surveyors to provide local resources to help respondents through domestic violence or other crisis situations as applicable. If your region has these resources, ensure surveyors have access and are informed about them.

General contact information for the Homeless Veteran Registry and the Day One domestic violence hotline is included on both the paper survey and PIT LIVE submission page.

Will you be administering the survey using paper forms or directly through PIT LIVE? Minnesota's survey administration process works best when surveyors utilize the paper survey. The count can be successfully conducted using only PIT LIVE (the online data entry portal). However, if you choose PIT LIVE, ensure the following:

- surveyors have reliable Internet access.
- surveyors have a method for documenting the Household ID of respondents so they can accurately connect household members together.

What is the best way to utilize surveyor fields (i.e., specific location, teams, etc.)? This is the part of the survey that allows for traceability, broad enough that you can tailor it for your own purposes. Is it different for unsheltered teams and non-HMIS agencies? What if a surveyor's respondent is staying in shelter but they are interviewed at a food pantry? How specific do you advise they be?

What are your thresholds for observations?

What will you advise surveyors about names or other identifying information if the respondent doesn't want to share (or if sharing increases identifiability, in the case of short names)? In some cases, a respondent may hesitate to provide the first 3 letters of their first or last name. Folks with short names (i.e., Al Chin, Bo Smith, Pa Lee) are, in essence, providing their full name where someone with a longer name is not.

If a respondent doesn't want to provide name information but will complete the survey, or if the survey is only partially completed, the survey can still be counted (they do not need to complete an observation form instead).

SURVEY OVERVIEW

There is a long and short paper survey version for unsheltered, non-HMIS sheltered, doubled-up, and school-based counts (HMIS data entry is separate). The short survey contains HUD data elements and the Minnesota data element "Tribal Affiliation". The long survey consists of Minnesota and HUD data elements plus additional questions about past evictions, employment, and education.

==IMPORTANT NOTE!!== All CoCs have chosen to solely use the SHORT survey for 2024. There will be no ability to enter long survey data into PIT LIVE.

Most communities in Minnesota utilize the paper survey for the live data collection, then turn that survey in to be entered into PIT LIVE. The Surveyor Instructions and information embedded in the survey will help surveyors navigate questions that apply to the count they are conducting.

==IMPORTANT NOTE!!== Agencies that enter data into HMIS should NOT complete the paper surveys or PIT LIVE. This is duplicative.

We recognize that local PIT strategies emphasize counts differently. It will be critical to ensure that as you train your teams, you indicate whether a surveyor should proceed with an interview if a respondent is in a situation that your community does not count (i.e., doubled-up or couch hopping, school-based).

DOUBLED-UP COUNT

Both PIT LIVE and paper surveys allow this response option without the need for a separate link or survey. Doubled-up responses will NOT be included in HUD tables, but they will be available in the raw data ICA provides to CoCs for local analysis.

PAPER SURVEY INSTRUCTION GUIDE

When training surveyors and distributing materials to agencies that do not participate in HMIS, always include the [Surveyor Instruction Guide, available on the PIT webpage](#) provided by ICA alongside the surveys. All surveyors and data entry folks should read and become familiar with the instruction guide (as should you); it contains critical guidance to navigate the survey successfully.

We recommend someone on every survey team is designated as a subject matter expert and is available to field questions.

PIT LIVE SURVEY DATA

DATA ENTRY

All responses to the PIT survey must eventually be entered into the PIT LIVE Google form. The following components are critical for a successful entry in PIT LIVE:

1) Complete **one PIT LIVE response per PERSON** surveyed. The first PIT LIVE question after the intro screen, "Is this the first survey you are filling out for this family/household?", is used to determine whether a response is a head of household (answer "Yes") or additional family member (answer "No").
2) The **Household ID** section is used to link additional family member responses to their head of household. **When completing additional family member surveys**, enter the initials of the first person surveyed (the first respondent) in the household exactly as they were entered in the Demographics section of that person's own survey (CoC field will be pre-populated).

Additional family member survey Household ID section:

Additional family members: Household ID

IMPORTANT! Record THE SAME household ID components on ALL surveys for members of a family/household.

A. Continuum of Care *

NEC Northeast ▾

First 3 letters of head of household's first name (first person surveyed in this family) *

Joh

First 3 letters of head of household's last name (first person surveyed in this family) *

Smi

These answers from the first respondent's survey (below):

First 3 Letters of First Name *
Would you mind if I ask the first few letters of your first and last name? [If individual is unwilling to provide first name, attempt to collect first three letters of first name.]

Joh

First 3 Letters of Last Name *

Smi

3) Additional family member PIT LIVE entries are asked two qualifying questions in PIT LIVE that are not on the paper survey:
    Will you also stay in a shelter or outside Wednesday night (or in the same location as first respondent if staying with family or friends)? This question ensures that the additional family are also experiencing homelessness. Answer "Yes" to continue entering data.
    Can I have about 10 minutes of your time? Answer "Yes" to continue entering data.

4) **Household composition** is calculated by how the first respondent answers this series of questions. We've taken the onus off the surveyor to determine household type. Instead, it is calculated using respondent demographics and the following questions:
    a. **Is anyone staying with you tonight?** Answering "No" skips the following household composition questions.
    b. **How old is each person in your household or group that is staying with you tonight?** Respondents are asked for the age of each member of the group.
    c. **If household/group includes only young adults or children, ask: Including yourself, how many are the parent or legal guardian of a child in the household?** ONLY ask this question of households containing no adult (age 25+) members. Answers are used for parenting youth data elements.

HOW TO HANDLE OBSERVATIONS

When surveyors are unable to interview respondents, they may use an observation tool to note household makeup and demographic information. HUD offers the following guidance on observations in the Point-in-Time Count Methodology Guide:

> **Using Observations When an Interview is not Possible**
>
> When conducting a street count, there are situations in which it might not be possible for enumerators to interview a person in an unsheltered location. It might not be safe to approach someone in an abandoned building or someone who is sleeping. In these instances, it might be necessary to count a person and determine some of his or her characteristics based on observations. An observation tool may be used in these instances to record some characteristics that can be observed by the enumerator. For example, it may be possible to determine a person's gender, but not his or her veteran status. Sometimes even gender is difficult to record, if for instance a sleeping person is wrapped in blankets or inside a cardboard box. When recording observations, it is important to record as much information as practicable about the physical location where the person is observed (e.g., the street name, any landmarks), as well as the person's physical description (e.g., clothes, personal belongings) to assist with deduplication.

Observations will often have questionable validity, and CoCs should ensure surveyors receive clear and uniform instructions on when to use them. You may want to consider not providing this option.

CoCs should pay particular attention to the observation tool question, "Is this person/family homeless?" If surveyor answers, "Not sure", processing of PIT LIVE data will exclude the response from analysis. If surveyor answers, "Possibly", the response is marked with error code (5), described above. In this case, CoC Coordinators/PIT Leads must determine if the response is valid.

Observations should not be used as a replacement for interviews, to represent a large group (e.g., a whole train car, everyone at a shelter).

AGGREGATE DATA

For: Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing providers that do not participate in HMIS and will not submit PIT Live surveys.

CoC Coordinators will provide ES/TH providers that do not participate in HMIS with the link to access the Aggregate Data Collection spreadsheet table and accompanying instructions (links will be available on the PIT webpage by January 16).

IMPORTANT NOTE!! Due to FY24 data standards changes to Race/Ethnicity and Gender fields, the aggregate data collection approach has to change. ICA will convene local partners in early January 2024 to further discuss and the ICA PIT team will keep local leaders informed as new/updated resources are made available. ICA will ensure aggregate materials are available by January 16, 2024.

REVIEWING THE DATA

NON-HMIS DATA

CoCs should have all locally collected data entered into PIT LIVE and the aggregate data collection table by **Friday, February 9**. The following week, ICA staff will pull together the data review tables and deliver to CoCs by **Friday, February 16**. CoCs will have edit access to these spreadsheets (meaning CoC/PIT leads can review and alter the data themselves – they do not need to leave comments and wait for ICA to "approve"). CoCs will have until **Friday, March 1** to review their PIT survey data (non-HMIS) and make corrections. ICA staff will be available to troubleshoot on issues as needed.

ICA will provide some training and resources to support CoCs in completing their local review of their PIT data. These will be available on the PIT webpage prior to the review process starting.

HMIS DATA

ICA staff will directly engage with HMIS-participating agencies around data quality issues impacting their PIT night data, starting in **early February**. Local CoC leadership is strongly encouraged to amplify the data quality review messaging as appropriate. Agencies will have until **Friday, March 1** to finalize their HMIS PIT night data.

COMPILING THE DATA

HDX TABLES

After data review is complete, ICA will produce tables for each CoC containing the data that must be submitted through HUD's Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX). These tables will be contained in a CoC-specific Google workbook that can be accessed with the CoC's PIT Google account.

CoC Coordinators/PIT Leads will enter numbers from these tables through the Homelessness Data Exchange.

WHAT ABOUT MISSING DATA & EXTRAPOLATION

This section is for your information only. **CoC Coordinators and PIT Leads do not need to participate in extrapolation**.

In cases where respondents did not answer every question or data is missing for other reasons, detail counts (gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) must be extrapolated so that they sum to the total number of people recorded for the given household type. ICA will complete all needed extrapolation following HUD guidance. Google sheet HDX tables will be updated prior to being sent to CoCs.

In 2020, increased validity checks were built into the data review process.

FAQ

These FAQS are compiled from past years. The audience is noted in each section. You may want to review these together with the folks you train locally.

GENERAL

Once I make error corrections, how quickly can I see the revised tables? After CoCs review data and resolve errors, ICA will make needed changes and re-run the calculations that determine error codes. ICA will send CoC Coordinators/PIT Leads a new copy of the surveys when responses are ready for further review.

Why are teen/youth parents in households that also include adults (age 25+) not included in Parenting Youth counts? HUD data collection guidelines for the Point-in-Time Count specify that parenting youth households are only those in which no adult over age 25 is present. Therefore, the survey question collecting number of "Parents aged 17 and younger" and "Parents aged 18-24" must only be asked of these households.

Is there a bottom age limit for the surveys? I work at a youth shelter and many of our youth are unaccompanied and are young as 8 years old. There is no bottom age limit to the survey. It is categorized by Under 18 and 18-24. An unaccompanied minor would be considered a household with only children.

What if the individual/household I call is staying in a county outside of my CoC? If the individual or household stayed in a county outside your CoC, you should complete the survey anyway. ICA will include this check during the data review (if any surveys collected include counties outside the CoC). We will then move the survey response to the correct CoC and check for duplication.

Should incarcerated individuals be counted only if being released on the date of the PIT? Persons in an institutional setting (jail, hospital, detox) should not be counted unless they were released the day of PIT. Those are considered "neutral" housing events and are not counted as sheltered or unsheltered.

Should persons in hospital/inpatient treatment/detox only be counted if released on date of? Persons in an institutional setting (jail, hospital, detox) should not be counted unless they were released the day of PIT. Those are considered "neutral" housing events and are not counted as sheltered or unsheltered.

SHELTERED COUNT: HMIS PROJECTS

How is PIT data pulled in HMIS? All ES and TH projects in HMIS with a valid CoC code are included in the PIT count. We do NOT run PIT reports by reporting groups.

If I work at a shelter, I will only be completing this for the families that are in my shelter, correct? Yes! If you enter data in HMIS, there is no additional data entry.

Can we call people on our CES priority list and ask where they stayed on the night of the PIT? Yes! You can call persons/households on the priority list and ask where they stayed the night of January 24th for 7 calendar days after the PIT. The best data collection method here is to complete a paper survey (available on our website), then enter their data into PIT LIVE. If they are staying in a different shelter or housing program, you should NOT complete the survey, as they will have completed the survey at the shelter.

Are we expected to interview people on the priority list? No. That decision should be made locally.

To which CoC does a scattered sites transitional housing program report data? If the TH project is in HMIS, the data will be pulled by CoC Code. So, if a single scattered site provider spans multiple CoCs, whichever is the CoC of record is where they will count. If the TH project is not in HMIS, then you should complete the PIT LIVE survey, inputting the CoC that corresponds to the physical location of the building. If you'd like to discuss HMIS options for this, contact the ICA PIT team at mnpit@icalliances.org.

Do we count RRH projects? RRH projects are not included in the PIT Count (though they are included in the HIC). If a client is enrolled in RRH but not yet housed, and stays in shelter on the night of PIT, they should be counted.

I only administer transitional housing programs. So, as long as my HMIS data is up to date, I should be okay? If the transitional housing programs are all in HMIS, then yes. If there are transitional housing programs that do not participate in HMIS, please ask them to complete either the client-level PIT LIVE survey or the agency-level Aggregate Data Collection Form.

Do we enter our data in either HMIS or PIT LIVE? If your project participates in HMIS, you should not complete the PIT LIVE survey.

If we are an emergency domestic violence shelter, do we participate in our typical data entry or PIT LIVE? If you provide shelter to victims/survivors of domestic violence, we recommend consulting your CoC Coordinator about the best way to participate in the Point-in-Time. This can vary depending on several factors, including the percentage of beds designated to DV. See HUD's 2019 Guidance for Domestic Violence Partners and CoCs on participating in the PIT Count. Reporting on the count of DV survivors (as a distinct subpopulation) is optional.

Can shelters conduct unsheltered surveys with people they have to turn away? Yes! They can absolutely include these individuals/families in the unsheltered count if they verify where they stayed the night of the PIT.

SHELTERED COUNT: NON-HMIS PROJECTS

Our region has a church of the week rotating shelter program that does not participate in HMIS. Are individuals/families in this program considered sheltered or unsheltered? While PIT guidance does not directly address this situation, HUD guidance elsewhere categorizes rotating shelter projects at religious institutions as *sheltered overflow facilities*. We recommend including this project in the non-HMIS emergency shelter count. However, we also recommend connecting with your CoC Coordinator or PIT Lead to verify this.

I work at a complex agency/scattered site facility that spans more than one CoC, which CoC's survey should I use? If the TH project is not in HMIS, then you should complete PIT LIVE, inputting the CoC that corresponds to the physical location of the facility.

If I work at a shelter or transitional housing program that doesn't participate in HMIS, when do I have to have the surveys entered? For data entry deadlines, defer to your local planning team. ICA will accept responses until February 9, 2024.

UNSHELTERED COUNT: PIT LIVE AND PAPER SURVEYS

I saw a PIT LIVE Demo on your website. Will this link work the night of the PIT count? No! We will close the demo survey the day before the PIT. Your CoC Coordinator and PIT Leads will receive the PIT LIVE link to be used for the count. Be sure you're using the correct link before you set out to survey.

When do community events occur? Community events like Project Connect typically occur after sunrise of the PIT, and surveyors ask about the night before.

Can I conduct a survey using PIT LIVE on my iPhone, tablet, or other device? Yes! If you have reliable data or wireless connections, you can complete PIT LIVE on a mobile device. PIT LIVE has the same functionality as Google Forms. Surveyors must document Household ID (i.e., first 3 letters of first and last name of first respondent, as well as CoC abbreviation) when interviewing respondents in order to connect the household together. Note: **The survey must be administered by a trained surveyor. Respondents should not complete the survey independently.**

Where is the PIT LIVE observation tool? The Observation Tool is included within the PIT LIVE survey (it is not a separate link). To navigate to the Observation Tool, answer "Yes" to the first question, complete the next page, and then select the most appropriate "No" option on the Consent page. The survey will then navigate to the Observation Tool.

DOUBLED-UP OR COUCH HOPPING

Does this refer to persons doubled up at entry into an ES or TH program in HMIS? No. Living situation prior to entry is not factored into the PIT Count. The doubled-up count in Minnesota is an attempt to shed light on an often-hidden side of homelessness. This count often comes from local partnerships, like food pantries, schools, and CES priority lists.

What do you mean by "doubled-up"? Doubled-up means temporarily staying with family or friends (less than 12 months) – it is also often referred to as "couch-hopping". HUD does not track this as a form of homelessness, but Minnesota does.
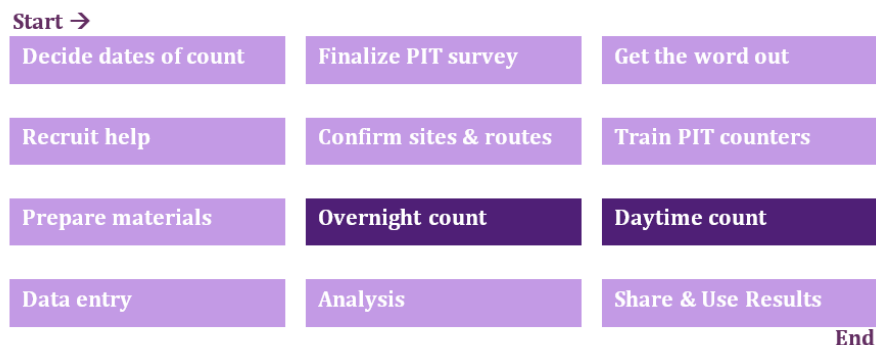
SCHOOL-BASED COUNT

ICA produced school-based instructions in 2019 and they remain unchanged. See our [website](#) for school-based instructions.

COC SUCCESS TIPS

If your CoC has PIT Count tips or techniques you think would be helpful to other regions, please let us know! We will add information CoCs share to this section for future counts. In the meantime, you may find the tips below helpful.

- Have a local lead who's dedicated to reading ALL process documentation, memorizing the workflow, and being the designated subject matter expert on these resources.
- Map out your PIT Count process ahead of time. Here is an example process from one CoC. This graphic was produced by The Improve Group and are shared with permission from St. Stephen's Human Services and Hennepin County.

Start →

Decide dates of count	Finalize PIT survey	Get the word out
Recruit help	Confirm sites & routes	Train PIT counters
Prepare materials	Overnight count	Daytime count
Data entry	Analysis	Share & Use Results

End

HUD RESOURCES

As ICA developed data processes and is NOT an authority on the on-the-ground administration or coordination of PIT, we want to point you to the most recent HUD resources on the topic.

2024 HIC AND PIT DATA COLLECTION NOTICE

https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/OCHCO/documents/2023-11cpdn.pdf

Note: HUD expanded the data collection and reporting requirements for race, ethnicity, and gender categories as seen on page 5 of the HIC and PIT data collection notice.

HUD VOLUNTEER TRAINING TOOLKIT

HUD published several new resources for the count. We recommend reviewing these to determine if any may be useful to your local count.

https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5864/pit-count-volunteer-training-toolkit/

https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6543/hic-and-pit-count-safety-considerations-for-counting-during-covid19/

HUD METHODOLOGY RESOURCES

2019 Methodology Office Hours: https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/courses/point-in-time-count-methodology-office-hours-october-2019/

HUD 2014 Methodology Guide: https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/PIT-Count-Methodology-Guide.pdf

MOST CURRENT HDX SUBMISSION GUIDE

https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hdx/

This section will log any changes in process from year to year, as well as any updates after release.

Major Versions	Description of Major Changes

V2019.1	Original beta release
	Features in 2019:
	o <u>ONE SURVEY</u>
	    o <u>One version</u> for all methods of counting (unsheltered, sheltered (non-HMIS), doubled-up). **This means surveyors will not need to shuffle between different surveys if a respondent says they're staying with friends or in shelter.**
	    o For PIT LIVE, a separate submission is done for <u>each person</u> (not one submission per household as in past years).
	o Removed from the survey:
	    o Long-term homeless questions
	    o Immigration status question
	    o Extent of disability question
	    o Simplified housing history set of questions (for chronic homeless determination)
	• Simplified:
	    o Household type: Rather than a single question in which the surveyor must determine household type, this year we are asking for the data we need to determine household type on the back end.
	• Survey layout
	    o Clear instruction to surveyor identifying when a question can be skipped
	    o Trauma-informed guidance for sensitive questions
	• Data Review
	    o In the data review spreadsheet for PIT LIVE, each row represents a person rather than a household as in past years.
	• Data available for local analysis
	    o ICA will provide a spreadsheet of raw PIT LIVE data optimized for local analysis as well as a compilation of all data sources (PIT LIVE, HMIS, etc.) that CoCs can use for their own calculations
	
	• CES Contact list available in HMIS: This report includes contact information of individuals on your region's Priority List. It is an optional resource to assist CoCs that choose to contact those on a priority list on PIT night.

V2020.1	• Improved training materials • Added Household ID quiz • Added county where resides to HMIS data • Removed Error Code 3 • Added Error Code 9, 10
V.2021.1	• Removed VFMN Count • Updated link to HUD Notice

V2022.1	• Updated link to HUD Notice
	• Added link to HUD Safety Guidance for COVID
	• Added new aggregate data collection Google form info
	• Removed Google sheets aggregate data collection instructions
	• Features in 2022
	    o <u>Two Surveys</u>
	        ▪ A long survey which includes HUD data elements and additional questions from previous years
	        ▪ A short survey which includes HUD data elements and the Minnesota data element Tribal Affiliation
	    o Aggregate Data Collection
	        ▪ A Google form will be used this year for non-HMIS agencies, who choose not to use PIT Live, to report their PIT night numbers
	        ▪ To assist those completing the form, ICA created a step-by-step instructional guide to go with the new data collection google form
	    o Data Elements
	        ▪ All data elements have been updated to reflect the new FY 2022 Data Standards Changes

V2023.1	• Updated links • Added info on the new PDF version of the Aggregate data collection form • Added 2023 PIT changes for age
V2024.1	• Added 2024 HUD PIT changes for race, ethnicity, and gender • Employed Charter for PIT project • Expanded tools for PIT LIVE survey and aggregate data review • Aggregate tool section simplified (refers to other resources) • Built new code for processing and sharing data quicker and more efficiently • Added a Reviewing the Data section