

2018 Point-In-Time Count: Unsheltered Survey

What is the Point in Time Count?

The Point-In-Time Count is one of the main ways we measure homelessness in our state. It provides us with a snapshot of what homelessness looks like across Minnesota at one point in time. The Federal Government requires that each state attempt to count all people experiencing homelessness on one particular night of the year. The Federal Government also requires that every state conduct their PIT count within the last 10 days in January.

This year, Minnesota's PIT Count is on the night of Wednesday January 24, 2018.

The PIT Count includes a count of people who are living in unsheltered situations (those who are living outside, on the streets, in abandoned building, etc.) **AND** of people who are temporarily sheltered (those who are living in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or put up in motels through a social service program).

Why do the Point in Time Count?

- 1) It helps us to understand the scope of homelessness and identify trends so we can better target our resources, improve services, and identify gaps in service.
- 2) We use Data to Justify Current and new services and programs. Data helps us tell our story and make the case for more resources. It helps build awareness, political will and political support (at the local, state and national level) to have the right programs and services funded to meet the identified need.
- 3) It is a Critical source of national data on the number and characteristics of people who are homeless in the U.S.
 - Additionally, the PIT count is the main data source used for measuring national progress in meeting the goals in *Opening Doors: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. And, PIT count data is provided to Congress on the general homeless population and subpopulations of homeless persons, including Veterans, families, chronically homeless individuals, and youth across the nation.
- 3) Data collected through the PIT is used as one of the main tools to measure progress on our State's Heading Home plan to Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

It is a Statewide Effort

Working together as a state is critical to achieve the goals of preventing and ending homelessness for the families, youth and individuals who are experiencing (or are at-risk of experiencing) homelessness in Minnesota.

In alignment with the Federal Government, the State of Minnesota is working towards the following population goals laid out in Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness:

1. Resolve and prevent future Veteran homelessness.
2. End chronic homelessness in 2017.
3. Prevent and end homelessness among youth unaccompanied by parents or guardians in 2020.
4. Prevent and end homelessness among families with children in 2020.

What's new in 2018?

A question has been added asking if people are currently homeless due to fleeing violence. We will also be asking the same questions we have always asked regarding domestic violence so we don't lose the trend data associated with those questions.

We know that the correlation between violence and experiencing homelessness is very strong. Nationwide, 80% of families experiencing homelessness are headed by a female, and 92% of these women have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse at some point in their life. More than 50% of all homeless women report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness.

Attempting to Flee Supplemental Survey

During the 2017 Point-in-Time Count, the MN Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) partnered with the MN Office to Prevent and End Homeless (MN Interagency Council on Homeless) to administer a Supplemental PIT Count to count the number of people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. 48 member programs participated, making up about 60% of the direct service agencies, spanning across the entire state.

In Minnesota, on the night of the 2017 Point in Time Count, 991 people were counted as attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. These were people trapped at home with their abuser, doubled up, or sleeping in a vehicle.

Additionally, the MN PIT Count reported that there were “1,225 people experiencing homelessness reported they are or have been victims of domestic violence.” That means at a minimum, 2,216 people were homeless due to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.



The MN Coalition for Battered Women will again be partnering with the state to administer the Attempting to Flee Supplemental Survey. This survey does NOT replace the Point in Time count, but is done in conjunction with the count. MCBW will be working with their coalition providers to administer the count. You, as an unsheltered survey volunteer, do not need to worry about this supplemental survey. We just wanted to make sure you understood how it related to the Point in Time count!

Minnesota's Unsheltered Survey

1 Survey: 3 ways you can administer it! Using the same survey across the state allows us to tell a better, more consistent story of what homelessness looks like across all of Minnesota by identifying trends and root causes from year to year, and allowing us to compare differences in those stories between areas of the state (North vs South, Metro vs Greater MN)

Each format is asking the same questions, in the same order, so we will be capturing the same data in the same way.

The 3 survey formats are:

- 1) The one page unsheltered survey
- 2) The two page unsheltered grid survey
- 3) The online tool: PIT LIVE

Your CoC Coordinator has copies of the One-page and Two-page unsheltered survey tools for your use as well as the link to the online tool. Again, all three formats are the same unsheltered survey (same questions in the same order) – the difference is in how you administer the survey.

It is up to each CoC region to decide which format they would like their volunteers to use on the night of the count—your CoC Coordinator will provide direction to you on which of the survey formats you should use.

Getting Started

As you know, first impressions can start any relationship off on good or bad footing. When you are having a short interaction with someone (that has the potential to ask very personal questions), ensuring a positive first impression becomes even more important to get right.

Approach any respondent you come in contact with in the same way you would like to be approached to complete a survey—Introduce Yourself, explain what you are doing, be respectful of their answers and their time, and remember to Speak Clearly.

You will notice that, as much as we could, we have tried to write clear directions for administering the survey right on the survey itself—including the initial (what I refer to as “check”) questions.

These ‘check’ questions are questions 2-4 in the survey, and are referred to as “check” questions because the respondents answers to each of the questions determine whether or not you will continue asking them the questions on the survey. These “check” questions help us to make sure that we are asking the right people the survey. You will notice that directions identifying which answers would cause you to stop surveying someone are written right on the survey tool.

Doubled Up

Question 2 asks if they will be sleeping outside tonight or have been staying temporarily with family or friends? (*Sleeping outside* can mean sleeping on the street, in a vehicle, staying up all night, sleeping in an abandoned building, storage shed, fish house, or a home without functional utilities. Or, any other place not meant for human habitation*)

Please note that while HUD does not include being doubled up in their definition of homelessness, we as a State are interested in learning how many unsheltered people we come in contact with that are staying temporarily with family and friends. Questions later on in the survey will help us separate those who are “doubled up” from those who are HUD definition homeless.

Using the Unsheltered Observation Tool

If you cannot answer the check questions or the identifying information because you don’t want to disturb someone who is sleeping or who may not be able to answer for a variety of reasons, you should use the unsheltered observation tool to gather information on the person/people you are observing.

Please note: You may not be able to answer all of the questions on the observation tool—that’s okay! Please just answer as many questions as you are able to. Your CoC Coordinator will provide you with the unsheltered observation tool.

Homeless Veteran Registry

[The Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry](#) ensures that Veterans experiencing homelessness have access to appropriate housing and services. Anyone who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard can join the Registry, regardless of the type of discharge. If you are a Veteran and choose to join, a team of housing and service professionals will work together to help you access housing and services that meet your needs. Participation is voluntary. You do not have to join, and choosing not to participate will not affect your eligibility for services.

For the purposes of this PIT unsheltered survey, we will treat any adult over age 18 who answers yes to either of the first two Veteran questions as a potential Veteran. Those questions are:

Q16. Did you serve in the United States Armed Forces, which includes the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard?

Q17. Did you serve on Active Duty, or in the National Guard or Reserves?

If the Veterans you identify are not already on the Registry, we need them to sign a [Registry application](#), available on [The Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry](#) website.

Please turn in all of your completed release forms to your CoC Coordinator or site leader. All release forms should be turned into a CoC Coordinator within 24 hours after the evening of the PIT Count. Remember, these forms contain personal, identifying information, so please treat them accordingly and with care.

If a respondent does not want to join the Registry, please still ask them questions 18-23 on the unsheltered survey tool. Again, all of the directions for these questions are written right on your unsheltered survey tool.

After the Survey is Completed

- Thank the Person(s) you surveyed.
- Print your name and indicate which organization you are with or your 'home base' PIT count site in the space provided at the end of the survey.
- Put the survey in a safe place while you are surveying others.
- Return all surveys and Veteran Registry Release Forms to your CoC Coordinator or Site Leaders at the end of your PIT count shift. **Within 24 hours of the count, ALL forms must be returned to a CoC Coordinator**

Helping Someone

If you come across someone who needs help on the night of the Count, here are some resources for you to connect with.

- **Your CoC Coordinator** – have the phone number of your CoC Coordinator on hand. They know all of the resources available in your region and will be able to connect you with the information and resources you need.
- **Street Outreach Teams** – Not all regions have street outreach teams, but know if your region does and, if so, make sure you have their contact information with you on the night of the Count.
- **LinkVet 1-888-LinkVet** -Online support is available seven days a week for Minnesota Veterans and their families. LinkVet is staffed by a team of support specialists trained through the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA).
- **Day One Hotline: 1-866-223-1111**
Day One is a statewide network of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, youth-and community-advocacy programs in Minnesota. Day One hosts the statewide crisis hotline that connects callers to the nearest service or agency in their geographic area.
- **United Way 211** - United Way 2-1-1 provides free and confidential health and human services information, and covers the entire state. 211 call centers are staffed 24/7 by trained Information and Referral Specialists who quickly assess needs and refer callers to the help that they seek
- **Senior Linkage Line 1-800-333-2433** - The Senior LinkAge Line® is the Minnesota Board on Aging's free statewide information and assistance service. The Senior LinkAge Line® service is provided by six Area Agencies on Aging that cover all 87 counties of Minnesota and helps connect you to local services

Dress Warm, Have Fun, and Thank you!