

2023 POINT-IN-TIME STREET COUNT Frequently Asked Questions

When is the PIT Count?

The Point-in-Time Street Count (PIT) takes place in **January** each year during the day and overnight hours on a specific day during the last 10 days of the month. Volunteers will be paired with a team member or group and search in an assigned area for those that are without shelter that evening.

What is the purpose of the PIT Count?

Across the nation, every Continuum of Care (COC) (*the counties of Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin belong to the COC that TCHSC manages*) conducts a PIT Count during the month of January. This is an important annual benchmark that serves as an indicator of progress, needs, and gaps within our Continuum of Care. PIT Count data is reported directly to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Congress, the State of Florida, and local jurisdictions. The data helps demonstrate the need for services and funding in our area.

For more information about Continuums of Care, visit <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc>

What is the definition of homelessness used for the PIT Count?

The PIT Count focuses on people who are unsheltered and sleeping in a place that is not intended for human habitation. This includes streets, sidewalks, parks, alleys, transportation depots or other parts of transportation systems, all-night commercial establishments (e.g., movie theaters, laundromats, restaurants), abandoned buildings, farm outbuildings, caves, vehicles (e.g. cars, trucks, trailers), and other similar places.

What are the duties of volunteers?

The primary task of volunteers is to collect Point-in-Time Count surveys from people experiencing homelessness. You will be responsible for searching an assigned area and approaching those that you suspect may be without shelter to complete a survey. You will also offer information regarding available resources in the community. If you are uncomfortable approaching someone, you will complete a different survey identifying what you observed and who you suspect with reasonable certainty meets the definition of homelessness listed above. In addition, we ask that each team make contact with establishments that are open 24-hours/day to explain what resources are available in the community should they encounter someone in need throughout the year. Posters will be provided for each team to distribute.

What type of gear/clothing should I wear?

Dress comfortably in layers of warm clothing and wear shoes that can take rain or mud. Bring a jacket, set of gloves and a hat in case of wintry weather. Prepare for cool and potentially inclement weather.

Where will surveys be collected?

Indian River County – TCHSC, 2525 St. Lucie Ave., Vero Beach
St. Lucie County – Housing Hub, 609 N. 7th St., Ft. Pierce
Martin County – Martin Community Services, 435 SE Flagler Ave., Stuart

What are the qualifications to be a volunteer?

The PIT Count is an important project. Volunteers must be 18 years of age and be able to walk and stand for extended periods. Volunteers must complete the training, complete a 4-hour shift, accurately and carefully collect data, and keep information confidential. In addition, volunteers are expected to respectfully and conscientiously work with people from diverse backgrounds and maintain personal safety while collecting data (travel in pairs).

What is the time commitment for volunteers?

The 2023 PIT starts at noon on Thursday, January 26, 2023 and ends at noon on Friday, January 27, 2023. We are operating in Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin Counties simultaneously. Individuals can volunteer for one or more of the following shifts:

- 1/26/2023 – Noon to 4:00 PM
- 1/26/2023 – 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- 1/27/2023 – 5:00 AM to Noon

Will volunteers receive training?

Yes. Volunteers must complete a training session prior to collecting surveys. This year's training will be January 20th at 9:00 AM via Zoom. Additional questions will be answered at the training and you will be assigned your team and area to search. You will be allowed input as to your preferences. When you sign up, you will be placed on the notification email list. If you are unable to watch the Zoom training meeting on the 20th, it will be made available to you on a recorded ZOOM call to watch at your convenience before the PIT Count.

Do I need to complete training if I have volunteered in the past?

Yes. All volunteers are required to complete the training as some aspects of the PIT Count have changed this year. If you have volunteered in the past, you are encouraged to attend an in-person training to share your expertise with those present.

Will I be asked to look for people experiencing homelessness by myself?

No. All volunteers go out in groups of 2 or more.

Will the PIT Count be cancelled due to inclement weather?

No, the Count will not be cancelled. We can modify the Count (change times or re-structure search areas), but the Count will not be cancelled. You, as a volunteer, may wish to withdraw from participating in the Count, however, the agencies that are required to participate in the Count will still conduct it.

Can I volunteer with a friend?

Yes. All volunteers are sent out in pairs for safety. Feel free to bring a friend or partner with you, but be sure that they register as well.

Will I be outdoors the whole time?

You will be walking outside searching as well as driving around in a vehicle. Dress appropriately for the weather.

Will any safety/security measures be provided for volunteers?

Volunteers will work in teams of two or more and are instructed not to separate from their teams. No one should conduct the survey without other team members within their line of sight. Volunteers should not enter any abandoned building or non-public space. Law enforcement will be alerted and made aware that volunteers will be out that night. If you need emergency assistance, call 911.

Do I need to use my own car?

Yes, each team will require a volunteer driver. If you do not have a car, you may still volunteer and will be assigned to a team with a volunteer who has a car.

Will I be paid to volunteer?

We greatly appreciate our volunteers, however, volunteers are not paid or reimbursed for any expenses.

Do I need to bring anything with me that night?

You may want to bring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, hand sanitizer, and gloves. Please bring a pen, a charged cell phone, and a flashlight. For you and your team's safety, do not bring any large sums of money, valuables, or items/food to pass out to the homeless.

When will the results of the 2023 PIT Count be available?

Following the PIT Count, there is a significant amount of data entry, quality assurance, and deduplication that must be completed. PIT Count information is available to the public after all data has been reviewed and submitted to HUD. Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council will release the PIT Count information in April of 2023, and this information will be available on our website at tchelpspot.org.

Other Questions or Concerns?

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