

Point in Time

Annual Count Information

WHEN – Thursday January 25th

- Brief Training for “Counters” at 3PM at UWLCA
- On site at stations from 4-7pm

WHERE – 4 Sites and a Late-Night Team

- God’s Love /Our Place/Library-Anchor Park/Walmart Area
- Late Shift will meet at UWLCA at 9pm and disperse across town.

WHY - Every year HUD sponsors an annual census in every community to determine the number of unsheltered persons that reside there. The results of these surveys affect the number of federal dollars available to assist with these issues locally. *More details on the following page.*

HOW - Volunteers will have access to the 25-question survey on their phones and iPads. An interview takes about 5 minutes. Volunteers will have socks, gloves, hats, etc. to thank people for participating.

TO VOLUNTEER...

Email Jeff Buscher at the United Way: jeff@unitedwaylca.org

Be sure to include your phone number and where you would like to serve.

***Web-based Training for Counters – Strongly Recommended**

11am Monday, January 22nd OR 11am Wednesday Jan 24th (only one day required)

Links will be emailed to volunteers



Annual Point in Time Survey – Why It Matters

What is the PiT Count?

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a “snapshot” count of people experiencing homelessness, held annually on the last Thursday in January. It is conducted by local Continuums of Care (CoCs) in communities throughout the country. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires all CoCs to conduct PIT counts as a condition of receiving funding. CoCs are required to conduct a PIT count of homeless individuals who are “sheltered” every year, and a PIT count of individuals who are “unsheltered” at least once every two years. In Helena we choose to conduct an unsheltered count annually. The information gathered during the PIT counts is the main source of data used by the federal government to track the number, demographics and needs of people experiencing homelessness throughout the country over time. These numbers are also used to determine federal funding allocations to address homelessness. States and many local jurisdictions also rely on PIT data to inform strategic planning efforts, funding allocations and impact evaluations of current homeless programs and funding. Data is collected in January and reports are usually made available for statewide results in May.

How is Information Collected?

On the date of the Count (Jan. 25) Events are organized and managed by the United Way of the Lewis & Clark Area for our region. These events involve a complete census of the entire CoC, in known locations where homeless individuals reside. (God’s Love, Our Place, etc.) Volunteers, usually in pairs, attend planned gatherings and mingle, interviewing persons who appear to be unsheltered. Using a free app on your cell phone or an iPad, Counters ask clients approximately 25 questions to complete the survey. Any of which they can refuse to answer, the survey is fully voluntary. As a thank you, we provide gift cards to our Counters to give clients who complete the survey. A Client can only complete the survey one time, which is why the first question of the survey asks if they have already completed the survey. The app will eliminate duplicates. Every year we rely on the help of 30-40 volunteers who are encouraged to view a preliminary training online the week of the count.

What Makes a PiT Count Successful?

A successful PIT count locates as many people experiencing homelessness as possible. Communities that are not able to locate a large proportion of their homeless population on the night of the count will not have reliable estimates of those experiencing homelessness or information about their characteristics and needs. The count is open for 7 days following the night of the count, but clients are asked where they were on Jan. 25th. In addition, incomplete counts lead to the risk of receiving less financial support from state and/or federal programs that could be used to adequately provide services to homeless individuals and families. Another potential problem is that if a particular subpopulation of people experiencing homeless (e.g. homeless youth, families, etc.) is undercounted on the night of the count, a CoC will not have a complete picture of who in their communities is experiencing homelessness and therefore may not target resources to address their needs.

For Further Details Visit: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/coc/pit-count

How To Get Involved?

Point in Time Count Coordinator is Jeff Buscher at The United Way of the Lewis & Clark Area.

Office Phone: 406-442-4360

Email: jeff@unitedwaylca.org

Volunteers can select a site – and after signing up – You will receive training information via email.