

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance Guide to Unsheltered Point in Time Count 2024

Unsheltered Count

The Burlington / Chittenden Continuum of Care, the CCHA, is required to conduct a point-in-time count of unsheltered persons every two years, but we opt to conduct a count of unsheltered persons every year. For the unsheltered count, our members must account for and report on all unsheltered homeless people residing in their area.

According to HUD, individuals included in the Unsheltered PIT Count are defined as: *“An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.”* The PIT Count does NOT include people who are “doubled-up,” staying with a relative, or couch-surfing.

The CCHA chooses to do our Point-in-Time (PIT) count through a **night-of known locations count** supplemented by a **service point count**. The **night of the count method** (sometimes known as a “street count”) is a **count of people who are unsheltered on the night designated for the count (January 24th 2024.)** This includes people who are staying in public or private places not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including cars, parks, abandoned buildings, buses or train stations, airports, or camping grounds during the hours between sunset and sunrise.

Using the **known locations method** for the night-of count **includes conducting a count in specific geographic locations where unsheltered people are known to congregate or sleep overnight.** We should use an informed and reasonable basis for identifying known locations where unsheltered people are likely to be residing on the night of the count. We should conduct an interview and fill out the PIT Paper Survey or Google Form with unsheltered persons counted as is possible.

The **service point method** is used to supplement the night of the count approach. This method focuses on conducting interviews and filling out the PIT Paper Survey or Google Form with users of non-shelter services and locations frequented by people who are homeless. **Surveys and forms should only be filled out for persons who verify they were experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the night of January 24th, 2024.** Service-based counts can extend beyond the night of the count until seven days after the count.

Persons performing these unsheltered counts have seven days from the night of the PIT count to input information of persons who experienced unsheltered homelessness on the night of January 24th into our Google Forms data entry. This means, coalitions have until **February 1st, 2024** to gather and enter data on persons who experienced homelessness on the night of January 24th, 2024.

The CCHA will partner with local agencies to assist them in this count including:

- Outreach workers
- Law enforcement (e.g., police, sheriff, park rangers)
- Homeless or previously homeless individuals

- Emergency shelter staff
- Drop-in centers or day shelters
- Homeless youth providers
- 211 operators
- Faith-based organizations
- Mental health staff
- Detox program staff
- Food banks, feeding programs, or soup kitchens
- Local businesses and chambers of commerce
- Community development organizations
- Other community groups, particularly those that focus on specific homeless subpopulations (e.g., youth, veterans, Native Americans)

Known locations partners might visit to survey unsheltered persons include:

- Parks (local, state and federal)
- Alleys
- Parking ramps
- Public transportation systems
- Campgrounds
- Makeshift shelters, shantytowns, and tent cities
- Under overpasses and bridges
- Water control systems
- Libraries
- Emergency rooms if the persons are not being admitted or seeking overnight care; and
- 24-hour commercial establishments (i.e., laundromats, convenience stores, coffee shops)

Counting People in Residing in Institutional Settings in the PIT Count

Persons residing in institutional settings on the night of the PIT count, such as detox facilities, jails, and acute crisis or treatment centers should not be counted as homeless for HUD reporting purposes. HUD's definition of "literally" homeless does not include people "living" in health care facilities, foster care, corrections programs, and institutions. Some CoCs might choose to send count enumerators to local emergency rooms to see if any persons who are homeless are using the facility to keep warm or for emergency medical care and are not otherwise admitted or going to be admitted for an overnight stay in the hospital. CoCs surveying homeless peoples in these locations should include screening questions to determine where the person was staying on the designated PIT count night.