

# Minnesota 2017 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 Thursday January 26, 2017.**

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 (living in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or put up in motels through a social service program).

\*MN only- We will also be counting people that are temporarily doubled up or staying with family or friends.

## 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.

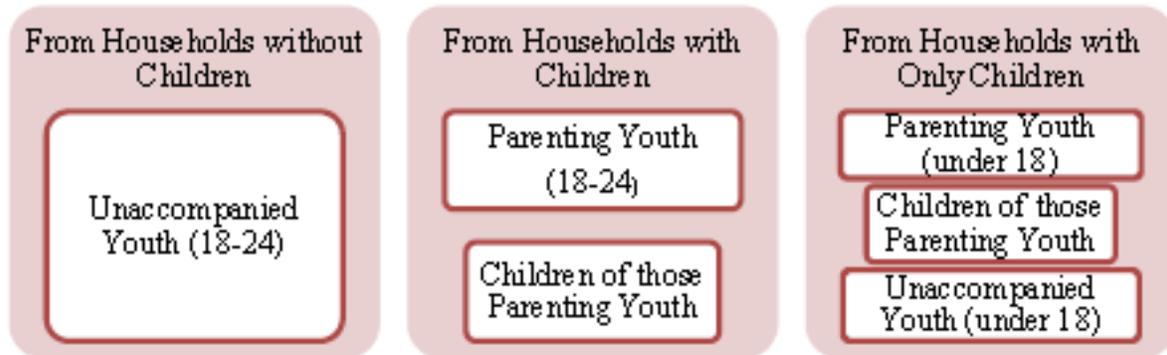
## 2017 is the Baseline Year for the Youth Count

This year is the baseline youth year for the PIT count! So, we need to make sure we're all EXTRA clear on how youth are counted.

Youth are a subpopulation of the larger overarching populations of "households without children" "households with children", "households with only children" and so they will fall into one of those three large population buckets AND will also fall into categories in the youth subpopulation section.

Youth includes anyone age 0 through 24 (young adults and unaccompanied minor youth) who is living on their own without a parent or guardian. Youth may or may not have their own dependent children.

- Parenting Youth is a young adult or minor who is living on their own without a parent or guardian AND has their own dependent children.
- Unaccompanied Youth is a person age 0 through 24 who is living on their own without a parent or guardian.



*Veterans, parenting youth, and unaccompanied youth data are a subset of the "All Households" data and should still be included in the "All Households" data.*

### Minnesota's Unsheltered Survey

1 Survey: 2 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 2 survey formats are:

- 1) The one page unsheltered survey for individuals
- 2) The two page unsheltered grid survey for families or multiple people in a household

Copies of the surveys are attached with this instruction guide.

### 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.

A Copy of the observation tool is attached with this instruction guide.

## Homeless Veteran Registry

As part of [Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#), the State of Minnesota and its partners have committed to end homelessness among Veterans.

[The Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry](#) will ensure 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:

1. Did you serve in the United States Armed Forces, which includes the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard?
2. Did you serve on Active Duty, or in the National Guard or Reserves?

If the Veterans you identify are not already on the Registry, please ask if they would like to speak with a representative from our Veterans Outreach that will be staffed the night of the count. (contact information on the attached flyer and below).

If a respondent answers yes to either Veteran question but does not want to join the Registry, please ask them back-up questions 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.
- Please remember Information is confidential and must be secured at all times.
- **Within 24 hours of the count, ALL FORMS must be returned to a PIT Count Coordinator**

**Benton and Stearns Counties, please scan and email to: [jwalker@ccstcloud.org](mailto:jwalker@ccstcloud.org) ,  
[Leigh.Lessard@co.stearns.mn.us](mailto:Leigh.Lessard@co.stearns.mn.us) or fax to 320-656-6220 (Attention: Leigh Lessard)**

**For Sherburne County please scan and email [hnewman@cmhp.net](mailto:hnewman@cmhp.net) or fax 320-259-9590 (Attention Heidi Newman)**

## More Resources

- **Street Outreach Teams:**

**HOMELESS YOUTH STREET OUTREACH:**

Jennifer W.  
Catholic Charities- SHY Program/YouthHouse  
(16-25 yrs)  
Benton, Stearns or Sherburne Counties  
(320) 250-2306

**STREET OUTREACH SOCIAL WORKER:**

Leigh L.  
Stearns County Social Services  
Stearns or Benton Counties  
(320) 333-7350

- **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
- **Central MN Veterans: 320-292-1356**
- **Vets Link 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).
- **School Districts:** EVERY school district has a Homeless Liaison for families. Please contact local school for more information.