



Point-in-Time Homeless Count
Thursday, January 26th, 2023
9:00PM-3:00AM
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the PIT Count and why do we it?

The PIT Count is an annual count and survey of residents experiencing homelessness on a single night in January, mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and locally led by the City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS). On the night of the Count, City staff, homeless service organizations, and volunteers conduct a tally and survey of individuals experiencing homelessness in both shelters and on the streets in Chicago. This information provides the City and its partners with a better understanding of the demographics of the current population experiencing homelessness as well as valuable data on what services or resources may be needed in the coming year. The count also raises public awareness about homelessness in Chicago.

How is Covid-19 affecting this year's Count?

Heading into the third PIT Count with Covid-19, there are a few learned best practices in place to protect the health and safety of volunteers, staff and those being surveyed on the night of the Count. Volunteers are vaccinated and asked to self-monitor both before and after the Count for any symptoms of Covid-19. Masking and regular use of hand sanitizer is required amongst teams, with extra masks and sanitizers provided to be handed out to those being surveyed.

Do I need to be an experienced outreach participant or city employee to volunteer?

You do NOT need to have outreach experience or be a city employee to participate in the 2023 Count. Volunteers with previous experience in outreach or homeless services work will be prioritized in 2023, however volunteers without previous experience MAY be matched to an outreach or experienced volunteer team as capacity allows. If you are interested in volunteering for the 2023 Count, please fill out this survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2023PITVolunteer>

Please note that completing this survey does not guarantee that you will be asked to volunteer for the 2023 PIT Count.

Do I need to attend a training to volunteer?

All volunteers will be required to attend a virtual training in advance of the Count. Additional details will be shared with volunteers once participation is confirmed. Please contact us at homelesscount@cityofchicago.org with any questions or concerns surrounding training.

How will I know where to go if I am volunteering on the night of the count?

All volunteers will meet at their designated host location on the night of the Count to receive area assignments, pick up supplies, and convene with their team. Volunteers will dispatch from the host location to cover their assigned census tracts or specific locations (e.g. parks), particularly areas where outreach teams have identified people residing recently. Additional details on host locations and area assignments will be provided for volunteers once participation is confirmed.



Do I have to participate for the entire 9 PM to 3 AM count?

Volunteers must commit to participating from 9PM to 3AM. Volunteers will be briefed and divided into their teams between the hours of 9:00 PM and 10:00 PM at their host location. Teams will then be dispatched after 10:00 PM to cover their assigned areas. Teams generally require several hours to cover their areas and are permitted to head home once their areas are completed.

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

No. Individuals will be placed on teams to cover their assigned areas and should not separate from their team throughout the Count.

Will I be outdoors the whole time?

Yes, so dress accordingly. Teams will be dispatched around 10:00 PM to survey their assigned areas outdoors. During those hours, teams will be traveling by car and on foot to canvass the assigned area.

Will any safety/security measures be provided for volunteers?

Volunteers will work in small teams and are instructed not to separate from their teams or conduct the survey without other team members present. Volunteers will receive training on how to safely conduct the count, including guidance on what areas to cover versus pass, e.g., volunteers should not enter any abandoned building or non-public space. The Chicago Police Department is aware that volunteers will be out during the Count. Staff at the City's Count Command Center will be available during the count hours to take calls with questions as well.

Do I need to use my own car?

No. Volunteers may decide to volunteer their car as team transportation for the night, but a car is not required. If you decide to drive, your car will be used as your team's transportation that night to cover the specific area assigned to you. 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?

Unfortunately, volunteers are not paid or reimbursed for any expenses, such as transportation to and from the host site location.

Do I need to bring anything with me that night?

For your health and safety, wear a mask and carry hand sanitizer to be used regularly throughout the night. To conduct the count and survey, please bring a charged phone or tablet with access to the internet. Wear or bring layers of warm clothing for yourself, including gloves and a hat in case of snow and wet weather. The City will supply items for volunteers to distribute, including hats, socks, gloves, hand warmers, and PPE. For you and your team's safety, do not bring any large sums of money, items/food to pass out other than those provided by the City, or other valuables.

Other questions or concerns?

Contact homelesscount@cityofchicago.org.