
2022 January Point in Time Volunteer Training

— HSC Point in Time Committee —

Welcome

- ***This meeting will be recorded.*** *It is a public record subject to disclosure. By continuing to be in the meeting, you are consenting to being recorded and consenting to this record being released to public record requestors who may see you, your home and your family members in the recording. You have the option to turn off you camera and participate with audio only.*
- Please mute when you are not speaking. Callers can mute and unmute by pressing *6.
- We will try to address some questions as we go. If you have a question, **type it in the chat** and send to “Everyone” or **raise hand** by clicking the “participants” or “more” option. Callers can raise and lower hand by pressing *9 and unmute by pressing *6.

Point in Time Overview

What is Point in Time (PIT)?

- A snapshot of people experiencing homelessness on a given night
- Done at the end of January across the United States by Continuum of Cares (CoCs)
- Wisconsin communities do it on fourth Wednesday in January
- Homeless Services Consortium (HSC) Point in Time Committee plans and implements for Dane CoC

Why do we do it at the end of January?

- Same timeframe for every community ensures consistency across the U.S.
- Same timeframe year after year ensures that trends are monitored appropriately
- Set for a night in winter because this can provide a more precise picture of who is unable to access emergency shelter or other crisis response assistance
- End of the month to ensure that people who can only pay for temporary housing for part of the month are generally included in the count

Who's counted in the PIT?

Sheltered Count

- **Emergency shelters** (including those using hotel and motel vouchers)
- **Transitional housing**
- **Safe Havens**

Unsheltered Count

- **Car**
- **Park**
- **Abandoned building**
- **Bus or train station**
- **Airport**
- **Camping ground**
- **Parking Lot**

Why do we do a PIT count?



To measure and monitor trends and changes in homelessness on local and national levels



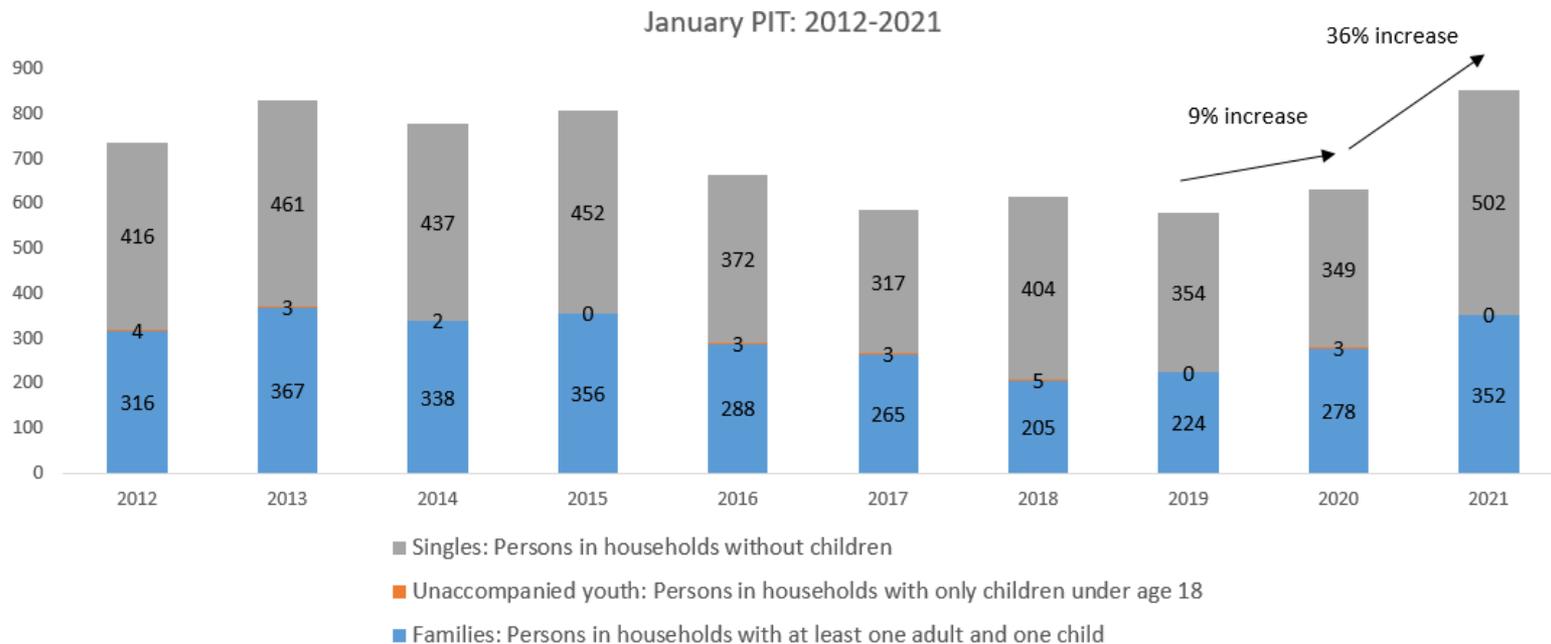
To help our community understand what resources we need and strategize the best ways to use them to end homelessness



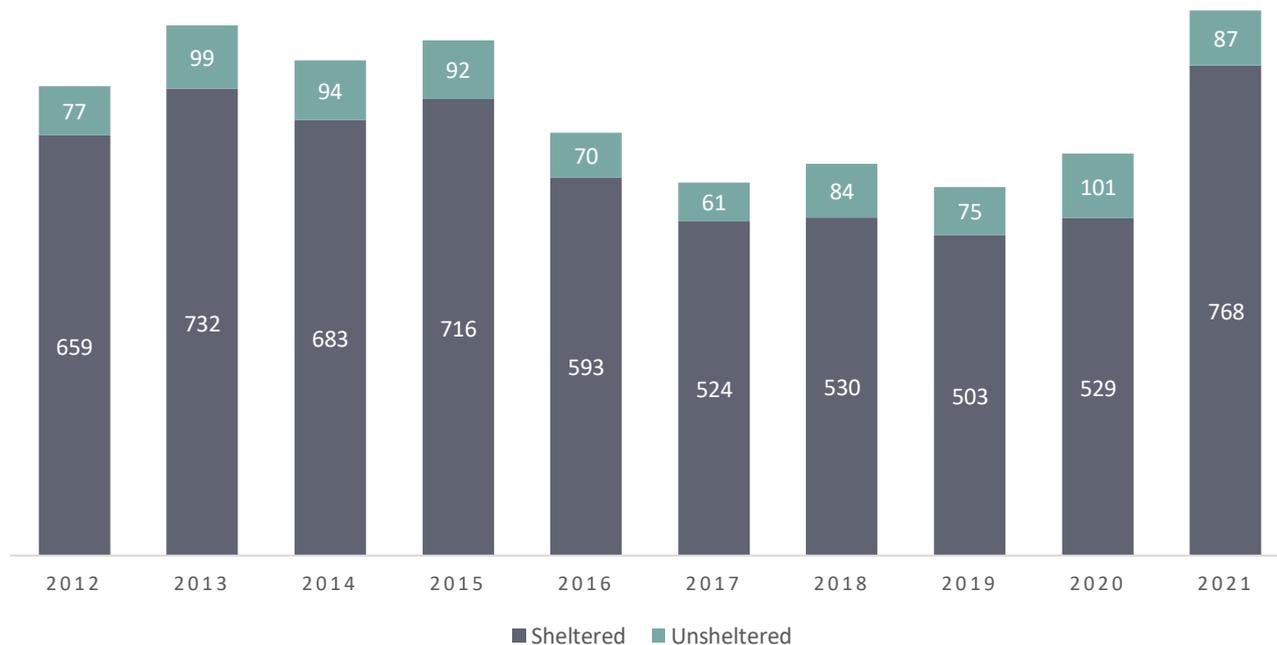
To comply with federal regulations and requirements

2021 January PIT Results

January PIT 2012-2021: by household types



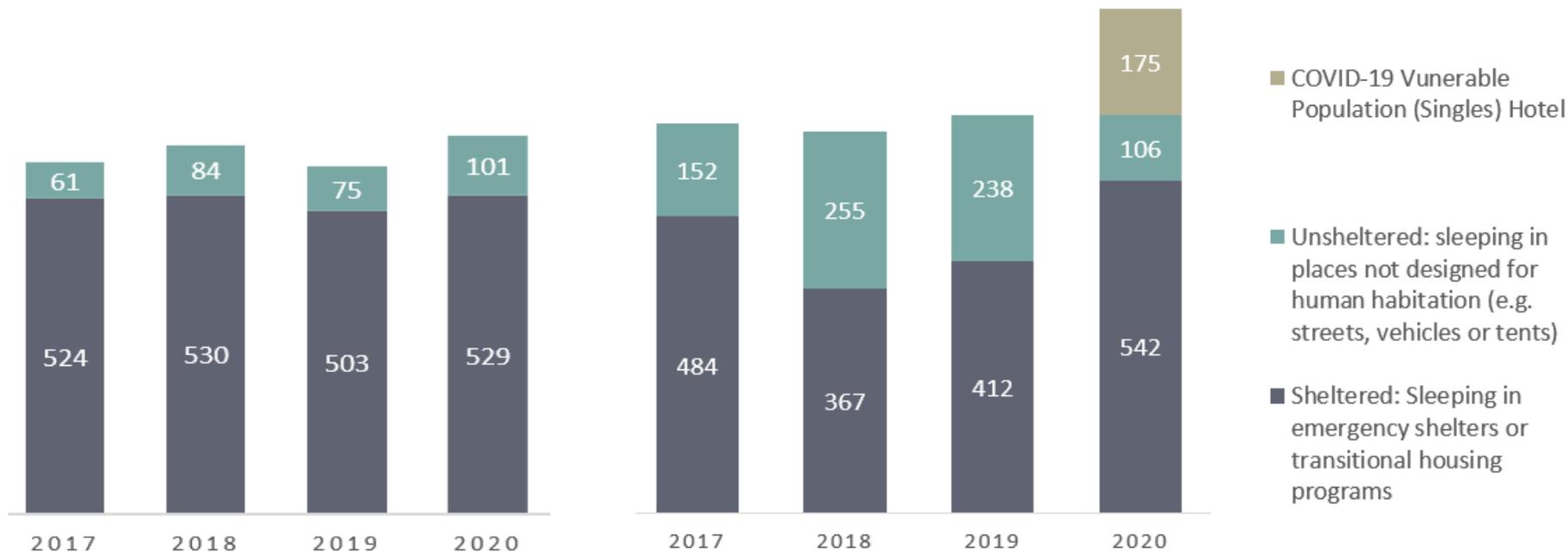
January PIT 2012-2021: by sleeping location



Unsheltered # typically triples in the summer.

January PIT (Winter Count)

July PIT (Summer Count)



PIT is one of several ways to understand the level and trends of homelessness.

2021 January PIT

855

persons

FY 2020 Annual # in ES and TH

2,316

persons

Unsheltered Count

COVID-19 precautions

- All volunteers are strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated.
- All volunteers are strongly encouraged to get tested no more than 7 days prior to the count. Stay home if you have any COVID-19 symptoms on the night of the count.
- Volunteers are encouraged to observe symptoms for 14 days after the count
- Volunteers must bring masks and wear them during the count.
- Teams should remain six feet apart from each other and people experiencing homelessness.
- Teams should consider driving separately to known location to keep social distancing, if team members are not already working closely together.

How do we conduct an unsheltered count?

- Brief interviews with people who might be experiencing homelessness using a survey form
- Observation questions if an interview is not possible
- We'll get to the specifics of **what** information is collected and **how** to have conversations to collect it reviewing the survey forms

Why do we do it at night?

- There may be people who will sleep in unsheltered locations who are not yet out for the night.
- We want to capture people's *actual* sleeping arrangement, not where they *plan* to sleep at a future time.
- We don't want to only interview people who "look" the way many people assume those experiencing homelessness must look, which is hard to do during daylight hours.

PIT Guidelines: Be respectful

- Remember that even if it is outside, we are entering people's personal space in the middle of the night.
- Do not wake or startle people. Do not knock, peer into vehicles, or point a flashlight at people. Many people suffer from PTSD.
- Introduce yourself and explain what you are doing. You can use the following script in the PIT survey form: "Hello, my name is _____ and I am a volunteer for the Dane County Homeless Services Consortium. We are conducting a survey to count people experiencing homelessness to better understand the homelessness in our community and improve our programs and services. Your answers will be combined with the answers of other people and your individual information will remain confidential. Can I have about 5-10 minutes of your time?"
- If there are group of people, be mindful of privacy.
- Everyone has the right to refuse to answer any or all of your questions.
- Genuinely thank people for participating and being giving of their time.

PIT Guidelines: Be safe

- Remote and potentially unsafe sites are identified as “Remote (R)” in the map and will be visited by experienced outreach workers on the following day (post count). If the location on your list appears unsafe, get out and inform Sarah Lim (slim@cityofmadison.com) the next day.
- Stay together. Never allow a single team member to be unaccompanied even to return to the car or use the bathroom.
- Assign a team member to be watchful of what is happening around the team, particularly in isolated areas.
- Know your location at all times.

Be safe (continued)

- Keep a barrier (clipboard, backpack, face sideways) between you and individuals you are surveying.
- Wear the lanyards provided.
- Never touch people. Some people may ask for or attempt to hug you. Position yourself to respectfully deflect this.
- If you happen upon someone who appears to be in significant distress, lacking consciousness or possibly overdosed, team leads will make a decision on what steps should be taken, including administering Narcan and calling 911.
- Do not directly intervene in situations that escalate to violence. Team leads will decide whether to call 911.

Step-by-step guide to conducting interviews

Step 1: Approach & Introduction

- Approach the person and introduce yourself
- If you are not sure if they are experiencing homelessness...



Hi, my name is [name]. We're out here trying to talk to folks who might not have a safe place to sleep tonight. Do you have a safe place to sleep tonight?

Step-by-step guide to conducting interviews

Step 2: Explain what you're doing & get consent

- Explain why you're there, using the script in the survey form
- If they consent to answering your questions, continue with the interview.
- If they don't consent, thank them for their time, offer a gas card, and complete observation questions.

Step-by-step guide to conducting interviews

Step 3: Conduct the interview using the survey form

- Introduce team members
- Specifically introduce a team member who will take notes or enter into Google Form, if not done by the interviewer
- Ask all questions in the survey as they are written
- Children in family households: only their initial, age, gender and ethnicity need to be asked.

(Review Survey Form)

Step-by-step guide to conducting interviews

Step 4: Closing the interview

- Thank the person for their time
- Offer everyone a resource brochure
- Offer everyone gas cards

Step-by-step guide to conducting interviews

Step 5: Recording what you heard and observed

- Walk away from the person interviewed to a safe place
- Take a couple minutes to double check that you've completed the whole survey form

If someone was sleeping and you couldn't do the interview

Answer the observation questions in the PIT Unsheltered Count Form marked with red lines (Q 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8) as best as you could.

How to identify a vehicle residence

If a vehicle exhibits three of the six following characteristics, then it will be considered a vehicle residence.

- The view through the front to rear windows is blocked
- The side and/or rear windows are blocked by sheeting, panels, and/or curtains to restrict visibility on both sides
- There is evidence of unfrozen condensation on windows
- At least one window is partially open
- There are items often associated with vehicular residency such as generators, bicycles, or storage containers externally secured
- There are unusually large volumes of possessions, sometimes appearing to be “refuse” (often in bags), within or near the vehicle

How to count a vehicle residence

If you identified a vehicle residence, approach the vehicle and attempt to speak with a person inside. Do NOT knock or peer into vehicles.

- If a person responds and gives consent, complete a full survey.
- If a person responds but does not consent, complete observation questions.
- If you can see or hear a person inside the vehicle, but the person does not respond, complete observation questions.
- If you cannot see or speak to a person inside the vehicle, do NOT count them. Instead, alert the post count teams by entering the information on [shared Googledoc](#) so that the post count teams could check back the following morning.

Post Count Teams: 1/27 (Thu) Morning

- Check the **shared Googledoc** around 6am on Thursday to identify locations to visit.
- It is possible that you may not have any locations to check, depending on how overnight counts went.)
 - If a person responds but does not consent, complete observation questions.
 - If you can see or hear a person inside the vehicle, but the person does not respond, complete observation questions.
 - If you cannot see or speak to a person inside the vehicle, do NOT count them.
- Update the status on the shared Googledoc (e.g. found the vehicle, did not see or hear anyone inside, did not count). Outreach teams will follow up later.

Post Count at Day Shelters: 1/27 (Thu) Morning

- Beacon, Safe Haven and Bethel Lutheran Church operate day shelters and will participate in the post count.
- Staff at those shelters generally know who are sleeping in shelters and who may be unsheltered.
- Ask day shelter guests who may have been unsheltered where they slept last night. If they were unsheltered, ask if they met a PIT volunteer overnight. If they had not, complete a survey. Include initials and be as specific as possible regarding the location for deduplication.
- We do not offer gas cards to guests counted at day shelters.

Post Count 1/27 (Thu) – 2/1 (Tue)

- Outreach teams may do additional post count through 2/1 (Tue).
- Do the post count only when you believe the person should have been counted but did not. (For example, you checked an encampment site on Wednesday night around 10pm and did not see the person who usually sleeps there. You ask the person two days later where they were on Wednesday night and they returned to their site around midnight.)
- Make sure to ask where they slept on 1/26 (Wed) night and complete the survey as needed.
- Include initials and be as specific as possible regarding the location for deduplication.

To Do: Meet your team by 1/24 (Mon)

Connect with your team by 1/24 (Mon) either in-person or virtually and do the following:

- Decide who will serve as a team lead
- Decide on the meeting time and location for PIT count or post count (most teams should start at 9pm; post count teams start at 7am)
- Decide who will do the interview and who will do write down the information
- Decide who will driver, if sharing a vehicle (it is encouraged to drive separately)
- Exchange contact info to report any last minute changes, including team lead cell number
- Review items to bring
- Review known locations your team needs to cover and decide the route

What to bring on the night of the Count

- *(Team lead only)* Team lead will receive a packet with a location list, paper survey forms, resource brochure and gas cards. **Team lead, you will receive an email from Sarah Lim soon about arranging the team lead packet pick up or drop off.**
- Fully charged cell phone (at least 2 cell phones with each team)
- Comfortable walking shoes and appropriate clothing for the weather
- Water to hydrate yourself
- Headlamp or flashlight (one per team member)
- Extra writing utensils
- Additional Items to give out (*optional*): food, water, hygiene items, etc.
- We recommend that you just bring your ID and not carry cash during the PIT count to avoid awkward situations.

Questions?

Sarah Lim

Community Development Specialist

City of Madison

slim@cityofmadison.com

Thank you
for participating in the PIT!