

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT: TIPS FOR INCLUDING PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

People who have experienced homelessness are an indispensable resource to a successful point-in-time count (PIT) of unsheltered people and should be actively involved in your PIT count. Many CoCs rely on input and assistance from currently or formerly homeless people when planning, organizing, and implementing a count. When recruiting people who are homeless and staying in emergency housing, CoCs should be sensitive to any shelter restrictions that could limit participation, such as program curfews or other requirements.

Roles of current or formerly homeless people in Point-in-Time Count:

- ✓ Assist in Enumerator Trainings. People who have experienced street homelessness understand the experience, safety concerns, and unspoken rules of living in unsheltered locations and they can often provide guidance to other enumerators on safe and effective outreach and engagement approaches.
- ✓ Identify Locations for the Unsheltered Count. If a person was homeless in your CoC's geographic area, they can assist in identification of street, public places and service-based locations that are most frequented by people who are unsheltered.
- ✓ Participate in the Count. Many CoCs recruit and encourage the participation of currently or formerly homeless individuals on the night of the count. Like others assisting with the count, they can either participate as volunteers or can be compensated for their time if resources allow. They may also be able to access homeless encampments that may otherwise be inaccessible to enumerators.



Steps for Recruiting Current or Formerly Homeless Individuals for PIT Count

1. Identify desired roles needed for PIT Count.
2. Determine if any incentives or compensation would be available to current/formerly homeless individuals to participate in the PIT Count.
3. Early in planning process, communicate to homeless assistance agencies the roles needing to be filled. Request assistance from agencies in identifying good candidates. Persons identified should not be in the midst of crisis and in no way feel compelled to assist.
4. After candidates are identified, provider agencies should contact them to ask if they would be interested in participating in PIT Count.
5. Once participation is confirmed, staff planning the PIT should review PIT plan and training content with the individuals and make necessary adjustments.
6. Include participants who will be assisting during the count in training.
7. Deploy individuals with teams on day of count.
8. After count is complete, consider asking any current or formerly homeless participants to serve in other CoC volunteer capacities, such as the CoC Board or consumer advisory committee.