



COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP SOLANO
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

2017 PIT Count FAQs

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) COUNT?

The PIT Count is an effort to learn more about the individuals and families experiencing homelessness on a given night in Solano County, but is not a comprehensive count of all those served over the course of a year. It captures a snapshot of those who are "unsheltered"--sleeping outside, in a car or abandoned building. In combination with the "sheltered" count, which is conducted on the same night, it provides important information about the level of homelessness in our community and the need for services.

WHEN WAS THE 2017 PIT COUNT?

The most recent PIT count was conducted on January 24, 2017.

HOW OFTEN ARE PIT COUNTS CONDUCTED?

The PIT count is conducted at least biannually in Solano.

WHAT DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS IS USED FOR THE PIT COUNT?

The PIT Count focuses on people who are unsheltered and sleeping in a place that is not intended for human habitation. This includes streets, sidewalks, parks, alleys, transportation depots or other parts of transportation systems, all-night commercial establishments (e.g. movie theaters, laundromats, restaurants), abandoned buildings, farm outbuildings, caves, campgrounds, vehicles (e.g. cars, trucks, RVs, trailers), and other similar places. Per the federal government's requirements, the *unsheltered* count only focuses on unsheltered homeless persons. It does not include people who are in shelter or transitional housing, or who are couch surfing or doubled up with family or friends.

WHO DOES THE SHELTERED COUNT INCLUDE?

The sheltered count gathers information on people sleeping in emergency shelters, motels, and transitional housing. It was conducted on the night previous to the unsheltered count.



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WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO CHANGES IN PIT DATA?

The PIT count may vary from year to year due to changes in methodology (i.e. the addition of a new subpopulation focus), due to environmental changes in any given year (i.e. flooding or extreme cold), and due to changes in the homeless population (i.e. may be impacted by housing markets, vacancy rates, benefit levels). Looking at longitudinal PIT data reported to HUD by the Housing First Solano CoC for 2005 through 2015, such variation is readily apparent:

- 2005: 3,540
- 2007: 1,956
- 2009: 829
- 2011: 569
- 2013: 1,329
- 2015: 1,082
- 2017: 1,232

WHY DOES SOLANO COUNTY CONDUCT A PIT COUNT?

Communities that receive federal funding for homeless services are required to conduct a comprehensive PIT Count every two years to maintain funding eligibility. The data collected from the count also helps the JPA, the CoC and the local jurisdictions plan for the funding and services needed to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families in the community.

WHAT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS DOES THE PIT COUNT COVER?

The count covers all of Solano County.

WHO COORDINATES THE PIT COUNT?

The Community Action Partnership of Solano, Joint Powers Authority (JPA) worked in conjunction with Applied Survey Research and the Housing First Solano Continuum of Care (CoC) Point-in-Time Count Committee to coordinate both the sheltered and unsheltered counts. The results of both counts are combined into a single Point-in-Time Count report.



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WHAT IS THE PIT COUNT METHODOLOGY?

The methodology used for the 2017 Solano County Homeless Point-in-Time Census is commonly described as a “blitz count” because it is conducted by a large team over a very short period of time. As this method is conducted in Solano County, the result is an observation based census of individuals and families who appear to be homeless. The census is then followed by an in-person representative survey, the results of which are used to profile and estimate the condition and characteristics of the local homeless population. Information collected from the survey is used to fulfill the federal government reporting requirements, and to inform local service delivery and strategic planning efforts.

The PIT Count methodology aims to be as comprehensive as possible by incorporating the following elements:

1. PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure the success of the count, many county and community agencies collaborated in community outreach, volunteer recruitment, logistical planning, methodological decision making, and interagency coordination efforts. Applied Survey Research (ASR), a non-profit social research firm, and HomeBase, the staff to the JPA and CoC provided technical assistance with these aspects of the planning process.

2. COORDINATED OUTREACH

The 2017 Solano Homeless Point-in-Time Count was a comprehensive community effort. With the support of 30 individuals with lived experience of homelessness, 81 community volunteers, law enforcement, and staff from various City and County departments, the entire county was canvassed between daybreak and 10 a.m. on January 24, 2017.

3. COMPONENTS OF THE HOMELESS CENSUS METHOD

The Point-in-Time count methodology had three primary components:



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- The general street count between daybreak and 10 AM – a count of unsheltered homeless individuals
- The youth street count between 3 PM and 7 PM – a targeted count of unsheltered youth under the age of 25
- The shelter count for the night before the street count – a count of sheltered homeless individuals

The unsheltered and sheltered homeless counts were coordinated to occur within the same time period in order to minimize potential duplicate counting of homeless persons.

HOW IS THE DATA USED?

Data from the PIT Count is used to inform policy, planning, resource allocation and evaluation of homeless services. For example:

- Count data is a required element of federal competitive grants such as for the Continuum of Care Program.
- Local governments and nonprofits use the data to help inform planning and coordination of homeless services.
- The federal government uses data from the PIT Count to evaluate our community's effectiveness in preventing and ending homelessness.