SACRAMENTO
STEPS FORWARD

Ending Homelessness. Starting Fresh.

2022 Sacramento Homelessness Point-in-Time Count

Overview

Every two years, Sacramento County and its incorporated cities undertake a large effort to estimate the number of individuals and families in the county who experience homelessness within a 24-hour period. A count will be held on Feb. 23 and 24, 2022. Hundreds of volunteers are needed to assist with the physical count.

This effort is known as the Homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, and is congressionally mandated for all communities that receive U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding for homeless programs.

Sacramento Steps Forward, a private non-profit 501(c) (3) charity serving the Sacramento region, leads the count as the lead agency for the Continuum of Care (CoC) in Sacramento County. A Continuum of Care is a regional planning body that coordinates housing and serves to meet the specific needs of people experiencing homelessness as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency.

The Sacramento CoC is comprised of a 25-member board which includes representation from local government, homeless service providers, people with lived experience, and the broader community of business, health, advocates, and faith-based groups. Since 2019 the CoC has administered $50 million in federal funding and $25 million in state funds for Sacramento area rehousing, planning, and other programs.

A PIT Count Committee, made up of a subset of the full CoC oversees planning and implementing the count.

The CoC conducted the last PIT in 2019.* At that time, it was estimated there were 5,570 people who experienced homelessness on a single night, either living in a shelter or outdoors, including in tents or vehicles. (A scheduled 2021 count was cancelled due to COVID-19.) In 2019, more than 1,000 people participated in the count. The CoC also contracts with faculty researchers at Sacramento State to provide upfront technical support and rigorous analysis and reporting out of the results.

_____

*https://sacramentostepsforward.org/2019pitcount/

Who Is Counted & Why

The PIT Count allows the CoC to estimate the total number of people experiencing both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in a 24-hour period throughout Sacramento County. But the PIT count also provides insights into the experiences and challenges faced by groups, such as families, Veterans and transitional youth. Combined, this information provides a better understanding of homelessness in our community and how to best address these issues with programs and services.

Volunteers are used exclusively to count those living in unsheltered locations. Shelter operators provide information on the numbers living in congregate facilities.

A Community Wide Effort Relying on Volunteers to Canvass & Assist at Deployment Center

The 2022 count is a full community-wide effort that requires upwards of 500 volunteers to complete. Volunteers can serve in one of two roles: be on a small team that goes out to predetermined locations to count or work at a deployment center. Benefits of being a volunteer include:

- participating in a unique and meaningful community event
- developing a better understanding of homelessness in our community
- contributing to equitable and accessible homelessness programs and resources, or
- earning community service credit (check with your school or program if they are offering this)

To sign up as a volunteer, go to 2022 Point-In-Time Count - Sacramento Steps Forward.

Volunteers Qualifications

All volunteers must be at least 18 years old and show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Fully vaccinated is defined as having had at least two shots of Pfizer or Moderna, or one shot of Johnson & Johnson vaccine. A booster shot is not required. Anyone who has active symptoms of a cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms will be unable to participate.

Volunteer Roles Explained

Canvasser:
Working as a canvasser, volunteers go out in a small team to a predetermined location where there is a reasonable chance of finding the unhoused. On count nights, volunteers will be assigned to specific sites and use a customized application on their smartphones to input data. In some instances, volunteers will be asked to approach a sample of people to voluntarily submit to a short question and answer survey and given a gift card in appreciation.

To be eligible to do this, volunteers must take a one-hour Zoom training prior to the event and during the count, be willing to travel by foot and car and use their smartphone. Training sessions are available between 5 and 6 p.m. on either Feb. 9, 15 or 22nd.

Health and Safety Considerations:

SSF uses health and safety standards provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development and follows Sacramento County's COVID-19 related protocols to ensure safety of volunteers and those they encounter while canvassing.

Training is provided to all canvassers beforehand to ensure safety and that of those they encounter, including when to engage and not engage with those they encounter. Volunteers are required to be masked, have had full vaccination against COVID-19, and are expected to maintain at least six feet from others. Areas such as the American River Parkway, and other remote scattered locations will be covered by regular outreach workers familiar with these locations, not volunteers.

To make sure unsheltered individuals know what to expect, the information about the upcoming PIT Count is communicated by professional outreach workers, day centers, and other providers. They also emphasize the benefits of participating in the survey, including receipt of food gift cards as a thank you for participating.

On count nights, each team goes out with a professional experienced outreach team leader. Volunteers working at the Deployment Center sites are also required to be fully vaccinated, and follow COVID-19 protocols.

Deployment Center Support Staff Opportunities

Deployment center volunteers support the operation by working at the check in and check out station; completing health screenings; serving as a food and beverage ambassador, or be involved in set up and take down of the deployment centers. Zoom training is not required; deployment center training is provided on site the nights of the count.

Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting Out

SSF contracts with faculty researchers at Sacramento State University to provide technical and analytical assistance in preparation of the count. A team of researchers under the leadership of Dr. Arturo Baiocchi and Dr. Susanna Curry, faculty members of the Division of Social Work and fellows of the Center for Health Policy, Practice and Research, assist with creating the counting tool, field testing it, and developing training tools for volunteers.

They and their research team analyze the collected data to provide estimates reported to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The researchers also draft a community report which summarizes and contextualizes key findings and trends to the broader local community.

The report includes population-level results and trends, extrapolating an estimated prevalence of homelessness across 12 months and makes conclusions on subpopulations and other characteristics.

How the Results Will Be Used

The 2022 PIT Report will be used to improve knowledge of the homelessness situation in the city and county of Sacramento, which can contribute to the improvement of equitable and accessible

homelessness programs, services and resources. It helps measure progress in decreasing homelessness and identifies strengths and gaps in the region's homelessness response system. It also forms the basis of need in applying for federal grants to support homelessness-related programs.

Visit the SSF website to learn more about the PIT Count, view volunteer-specific information and resources and to stay up-to-date. You can also contact the team at sacpitcount@sacstepsforward.org for PIT-related questions.

Updated Feb. 3, 2022