

Frequently Asked Questions about Count Night

Q: What is a Point-in-time Homeless Count?

A: Point-in-time Homeless Counts (aka, “PIT Count”) are large scale, community efforts to locate, count, and survey everyone who is experiencing homelessness at a particular point in time—Count Night. The Tarrant County Homeless Coalition (TCHC) coordinates Count Night for Tarrant and Parker Counties on the last Thursday of January.

Q: Why count?

A: Annual counts help us understand the changing trends, extent, and nature of homelessness in our community. The data is also used to measure the progress we are making in ending homelessness. Homeless counts take place across the United States during the last 10 days of January to provide the nation with comparative and longitudinal information on the nature and extent of homelessness. It is easiest to locate people who are homeless when it is cold, late at night, and at the end of the month.

Q: When is the count?

A: Thursday, January 25, 2018 from 7:00pm – 1:00am. Volunteers must be available for the entire period—check-in, training, deployment. TCHC anticipates that most routes can be counted within 2-4 hours.

Q: Who can volunteer?

A: Teams of 3 – 5 adults, age 18 and older. For safety, teams will stay together and conduct the count as a group, using ONE vehicle. This is an excellent project for congregations, community groups, and neighborhood associations; unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate volunteers younger than 18. We require teams of at least 3 people because this allows two people to conduct the survey and one person to stay aware of the surroundings; up to 5 people because we highly suggest riding together in one vehicle to the different areas on the map.

Many counting routes involve a good deal of walking through parks, vacant lots, and alongside roadways and trails, so wear comfortable shoes that you don’t mind getting dirty.

Note: Individual volunteers (without a team) may register to participate in the Fort Worth count only, and team assignments will be made on Count Night upon arrival.

Q: Can someone under the age of 18 volunteer if they are accompanied by a legal guardian?

A: No. Unfortunately, each person needs be 18 or older to volunteer for the count.

Q: I've never done this before. What exactly will we do?

A: Volunteers will gather at 7pm to receive training and their route assignment at one of four designated deployment locations in Fort Worth, Arlington, NE Tarrant County, or Weatherford. Volunteers will drive themselves to their assigned geography, canvas that area, and conduct the count. Volunteers will then return to the deployment location to report their findings.

While exploring an assigned route, volunteers will be needed to drive, navigate, record areas that have been canvassed. When interviewing people who are homeless, volunteers record answers to survey questions, hold flashlights to provide lighting, and monitoring the group's location and surroundings.

Q: What should we bring to count night?

A: Your team will need:

- a reliable vehicle, gassed up and ready to go
- at least two smartphones, 100% charged and ready to go
- volunteers dressed for outdoor walking (close toed or tennis shoes) and weather appropriate outer wear (bright colored jacket or reflective gear)
- at least two flashlights and fresh batteries
- optional: bottled water, granola bars or other nonperishable snacks to share with people you encounter. Our [donation flyer](#) provides more information on suggested items.

Q: What happens in the event of really bad weather?

A: It is unlikely that the count will be called off due to inclement weather. If ice or lightening are present, check your email, TCHC social media, or the TCHC website for updates.

Q: Who will be counted?

A: Persons who will be counted are individuals and members of families that are considered homeless on the day of the count, based on the definition of homelessness provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD provides communities with guidance on the definition of homeless:

A person is considered homeless when they reside in places not meant for human habitation such as cars, parks, sidewalks, and abandoned buildings. A person is also considered homeless if they reside in an emergency shelter, a domestic violence shelter, a shelter for runaway or homeless youth, or a transitional housing program, having arrived from off the streets or from an emergency shelter.

The count of the sheltered homeless, those residing in emergency shelters and in transitional housing programs will be taken from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), databases and other electronic client data collection tools used by homeless service providers.

Q: When will the results of the Homeless Count be reported?

A: Results of the homeless count will be shared with the public in March 2018.

Q: I need to provide documentation to my employer/school showing that I volunteered at this event. Where can I get this documentation?

A: We will provide you with signed documentation once you return to the staging location after completing your route.

Q: What time do I need to arrive?

A: If you are volunteering in Greater Fort Worth, check-in begins at 7:00pm and training will begin at 8:00pm. Be sure to allow enough time to check-in, find your team, and pick up your packet before training starts. Arlington, NE Tarrant and Parker County specific details will be sent in an email prior to the event.

Q: How will I know where to go once I get to the staging location?

A: TCHC will send specific details before the event to make sure you get to the correct location at the right time. Volunteers will guide you to volunteer check-in tables and the training room once you arrive.

Q: I am unable to count. Is there another way I can help?

A: Absolutely! Our [Donation Drive Flyer](#) has information on ways you can help with the count without counting. You can also sign up for our community newsletters on our website and volunteer at our other events!

REGISTRATION FAQs

Q: How do I register?

A: Go to www.ahomewithhope.org, click on “Homeless Count”, and click “Register”. Or click on "Register" at the bottom of this page.

Q: I registered as an individual but found a team to join. How do I change my registration?

A: Email tchc@ahomewithhope.org and let us know which team you will be joining. Be sure to include the Team Captain’s first and last name, as well as other team member’s names so we can ensure you are placed with the correct team.

Q: There are only two of us that want to register for the count. To be a team we need at least 3 people, but we don’t want to be separated if we register as individuals. What should we do?

A: Register as a team and we will pair you with another team on the night of the count once you arrive.

Q: Someone on our team is no longer able to count. Do we need to update our registration?

A: If your team still has at least 3 people, there is no need to update your registration. If your team now only has two members, please notify tchc@ahomewithhope.org and you will be paired with another team on the night of the count.

Q: If someone on our team is unable to count, can we put someone else in their spot?

A: Yes! Email tchc@ahomewithhope.org and include the Team Captain's first and last name, the member who is cancelling, and the member who is joining. Be sure to include the date of birth, email, and phone number of the new member.

Q: Someone would like to join our team, but we have already registered. Who do we contact to add this person to our team?

A: Email tchc@ahomewithhope.org and include the Team Captain's first and last name, and the member who is joining. Be sure to include the date of birth, email, and phone number of the new member. Remember: Teams can consist of up to only 5 people.

Q: Our team already has 5 people. Can we add any more people to our team?

A: No, we recommend only up to 5 people per team. However, you can always become two teams of 3 or 4 people to help us count more of Tarrant County!

Q: Our whole team needs to cancel. How do we cancel our registration?

A: Please email tchc@ahomewithhope.org with the names of each team member cancelling.

Q: I signed up as an individual but can no longer attend. How do I cancel my registration?

A: Please email tchc@ahomewithhope.org and let us know you would like to cancel. We hope to see you next year!

Q: When is the deadline to register?

The deadline to register is Monday, January 22nd. For logistical and planning purposes, team changes will not be made after this date.