

PIT Outreach or “How do I ask someone these questions?”



First things first...

- Be familiar with the PIT survey tool
- Be familiar with why the PIT is done
- People will ask these questions!
- Advertise the PIT

MEASURING HOMELESSNESS IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

What is the point-in-time survey?

The point in time survey is an annual count of individuals and families in Prince George's County who are homeless. This year, the count will be conducted on Wednesday, January 25, 2012.

How will the information be used?

The information will be used to determine the types of housing and support services that are needed by people who are homeless and to request funding for homeless assistance programs.

What can you do to help?

There are a number of things you can do to help make the count a success:

1. If you feel comfortable doing so, please talk to the volunteers who approach you on January 25, 2012.
2. Please be honest when answering questions about your living situation, your health, disability etc. The interviewers will work to protect your privacy and keep your answers confidential, but it is important for us to know what your needs are.
3. If you are approached more than once on that day, please be sure to let the volunteers know that you have already been surveyed.
4. If you know of locations where other homeless people are staying, please let the volunteers know. We don't want to miss anyone!

Thanks for your cooperation!

Engaging Homeless Youth Providers in the PIT Count

- CoCs are strongly encouraged to coordinate with their Local Education Agencies" (LEAs) homeless liaisons and Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) service providers, as well as any service organizations that assist homeless children and youth, to determine how best to conduct a comprehensive count of homeless children and youth in their area.
- It may be helpful to recruit current or formerly homeless children and youth to assist in conducting the count, as they may be able to identify areas where homeless children and youth congregate, as well as assist in conducting interviews.

SAFETY

- Your supervisor needs to know where you will be at all times.
- Learn as much as possible about the situation before setting out to do outreach.
- Do not plan outreach in areas which you have good reason to believe are inherently dangerous.
 - Including dogs and wildlife
- Be aware of gang areas and their colors. Avoid wearing those colors.
- Always carry business cards and identification with you.

SAFETY

- Inform collaborating agencies of your presence.
- Introduce yourself and inform people of what you are doing and why.
- Do not stand and argue with someone who does not agree with what you are doing.
- Outreach is preferably conducted in two-person teams. No team member should conduct outreach activities alone unless receiving prior approval from their supervisor.

SAFETY

- Do not approach those who are giving “signs” that they do not want to be bothered.
- Do not be critical of your partner in public while conducting outreach. Always present yourselves as a team.
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Do not overdress.
- Do not carry valuables or other personal possessions such as jewelry, large amounts of money, radios, laptops, etc. If carrying incentives, make arrangements to hold these in a secure place.

SAFETY

- Do not remain in a spot where you are privy to a drug deal in process or is being set up to “go down.” Leave the area immediately without drawing attention to yourself or others.
- Do not linger with a person who you know is holding illicit drugs.
- Do not interrupt the sale of sex or drugs for money. Leave the area immediately without drawing attention to yourself or others.
- Do not counsel or play the role of a social worker on the streets.

SAFETY

- Maintain confidentiality with all clients you meet.
- Do not accept gifts, food or buy any merchandise from clients.
- Do not give or lend money to clients.
- Do not accept or hold any type of controlled substance.
- Never enter any clients' cars, homes or any enclosed area.

SAFETY

- Develop a contingency plan for worst-case scenarios or dangerous situations with your partner and supervisor.
- Keep your supervisor informed of any unusual developments.
- In case of an emergency, call or have another person call 911. Do not separate from your partner unless you feel that staying would increase your danger.
- <http://www.nhchc.org/clinicalresources/outreach>

Making An Introduction

The key is to present in general as a person who cares and is willing to "meet the individual where they're at." Thereafter, one's role and affiliations are defined more specifically as trust is built and the relationship develops. Below are some "identities" with which workers might introduce themselves:

- Physical "presence" (little if any verbal contact)
- Fellow human being
- Neighbor
- Concerned citizen
- Outreach worker
- Health/mental health/chemical dependency specialist

(Adapted from unpublished papers by Craig Rennebohm)

"Hi I'm Janet"
"And I'm Leidy"

"We are with the Coalition for the Homeless and are conducting the annual count required by HUD. *If you are homeless* we would like your help by answering some quick questions?"

"It only takes a minute or two."

"Everything is confidential."

"This count helps us plan for services to help the homeless."

"Thank you, we really appreciate your time"



Other considerations:

- Based on local jurisdiction plans:
 - Incentives...hats, socks, gloves, blankets, food, water
 - Refusals/unapproachable...per your local plan record as much info as possible – it is OK for people to refuse to answer specific questions
 - Information and referral...if trained and prepared to do so
 - Level of involvement has a wide range of possibilities depending on who is on your team...verbal I&R, transport to shelter/other services, formal referral.

“Tools of the Trade”

- Dress for the weather/ID
- Clipboards
- Pens/pencils
- Sufficient survey tools (language specific, electronic?)
- Flashlight
- Cell phone – charged/er and numbers exchanged
- Map/survey grid directions
- Envelope to place completed surveys in
- Vehicle?

CAUTION: Sensitive stuff

- Many of the questions are very personal and may “strike a nerve”
- Remember the prior slides on how to present yourself...caring, not prying
- Remind the respondent that the answers are confidential and explain confidential if needed
- Ask the questions in a private area of have the respondent point to the correct answer if they can