

BECAUSE EVERYONE COUNTS



TUESDAY, APRIL 21st
NELSON'S POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESSNESS COUNT

Information for Volunteers/ FAQs

What is a Point-In-Time Count?

A Point-In-Time (PiT) Count is a nationally-coordinated voluntary survey conducted over a 24-hour period to gather information about the extent and nature of homelessness in Nelson. It involves more than simply counting people; the methodology is designed to increase our understanding of the demographics of those who are experiencing permanent and cyclical homelessness, those living in unsafe or provisional housing situations in Nelson, and what they identify as their service and housing needs.

When is the Point-in-Time Count?

The PiT Count will occur on Tuesday April 21st, 2020. Those in shelters, transitional housing and in institutions or “public systems” will be counted the night before on April 20th.

Why is a Point-in-Time Count important?

The PiT Count is a tally of who is homeless on a given day and provides a snapshot of who experiences homelessness throughout the year.

- Findings from the PiT Count Surveys will shed a light on the housing and service needs specific to Nelson
- The PiT Count Survey will provide information to aid community organizations, funders and all levels of government to plan for the funding and service needs of homeless and at-risk persons in Nelson
- Data from the PiT Count Survey can be compared to previous counts to tell us how successful we have been in addressing homelessness.

The PiT Count Survey will include indicators of how many people are experiencing homelessness in Nelson, types of places they stay, and how long/how many times they have been homeless. It will gather demographic information like age, gender, Aboriginal and newcomer status.

Why is the PiT Count Survey completed in 24 hours?

The methodology of the PiT Count Survey has been used in many communities across Canada and other parts of the world. It is done over 24 hours to reduce duplication and to make it as cost and resource effective as possible. Because it is the same method and most of the same questions used in many cities, it will be possible to compare results across Canada.

Where will we conduct the Survey?

Any enumeration of homeless populations is only an estimate. This is because invisibility is a survival strategy for many people who are homeless. The PIT Count Survey in Nelson uses the following methodology to provide the best possible estimate:

AGENCY STAFF - Sheltered Survey – in the evening on April 20th (no volunteer involvement)

The sheltered survey includes all emergency/ domestic violence shelters and transitional/short-term or programmed housing in Nelson.

VOLUNTEERS - Indoor Known Locations Survey - 4 hour shifts from 8:30 to 4:30 pm April 21st

Surveys take in place at participating community or social services, drop in sites, meal and food services, etc., and reaches individuals who may be missed in the street or sheltered surveys.

VOLUNTEERS - Street Survey - 4 hour shifts from 7:25 am to 6:00 pm April 21st

The street survey will reach people living in public/private places without contract or places not intended as a shelter. A map of where the volunteers walk for the street survey will be available.

AGENCY STAFF - Data from agencies/systems - (no volunteer involvement)

The Point-in-Time Coordinator gathers data from systems such as Interior Health to determine if anyone staying overnight in these systems would be included in the count.

Who will be conducting the surveys?

Surveys will be conducted by approximately 30 to 40 trained volunteers, including community volunteers, service provider staff and outreach workers.

Will there be training available for volunteers?

Yes. In fact, training is **mandatory**. All volunteers will receive training in interviewing and survey recording, cultural safety for participants, safety for themselves, and ethical research with people experiencing homelessness. The training will include confidentiality and consent requirements. All survey teams will include one experienced professional in the social services sector and individuals with lived experience of homelessness, whenever possible. **All volunteers are asked to report to headquarters at least 15 to 30 minutes before their shift starts**, to allow time for collecting supplies and any travel time to your start location. As well, turning in the surveys and a short debrief will be required at headquarters after the survey shift is complete for all volunteers. When you sign up to volunteer you will choose one of the following training dates:

Tuesday April 14th (11:00AM-1:00PM)

Wednesday April 15th (4:30PM-6:30PM) optional Naloxone training at 2:30pm

Friday April 17th (1:00PM-3:00PM)

Saturday April 18th (11:00AM-1:00PM)

What are the requirements to volunteer?

Volunteers must be 19 or older and can come with a friend or on their own (we will match them with a team). We are looking for three types of volunteers:

General Volunteers: General volunteers do not have to have experience working with people who are homeless, though this is an asset. We are looking for volunteers who have strong English communication skills, are good listeners and are non-judgmental.

Volunteers with Lived Experience of Homelessness:

We may seek to have someone with lived experience of homelessness on a few volunteer teams. This person will be a resource for other members, educating on how to approach people, introducing volunteers to people on the street, etc.

Team Leads:

We will ideally have someone with experience working with people who are homeless on each volunteer team. This can be someone with lived experience of homelessness too. Team Leads will take a slightly longer training session and will be responsible for making sure their team has all the supplies needed and ensuring the team's surveys are filled in properly and that their team volunteers return with their surveys to Headquarters for a short debrief after their shift. For shelters and transitional housing, team leaders will return surveys to the headquarters for a debrief the day of the count, as well as being the point of contact for their teams. Team Leads need to have experience working with people who are homeless and need to be organized and assertive.

Headquarter Volunteers: Volunteers will also be involved throughout the day at the Headquarters greeting, directing, registering, supplying materials to and debriefing surveyors, as well as help with refreshments, first aid back-up and more!

What is the time commitment?

In total, about 6 to 7 hours between a training session and the Count surveying and debriefing.

Most survey shifts are 4 hours BUT time to register and debrief is required, so between 4.5 to 5 hours, depending on travel time to survey site. AS WELL, all volunteers must be available for a **mandatory 2 hour training (up to 3 hours for team leads)** in the two weeks before the PiT Count Survey. So a minimum of a 4.5 hour survey shift plus 2 hour training, or up to 3 hour training if a team leader (for a shelter, large drop in site etc.). All surveying will be on Tuesday, April 21st, except for shelters and transitional/short term housing, which may be done the night before.

What are the benefits of volunteering?

Just a few hours of your time will help to gather information about the extent and demographics of homelessness in Nelson. Volunteering with the PiT Count Survey is an opportunity to learn about homelessness directly from the individuals experiencing it, while helping to raise that awareness among others in Nelson. Volunteers will also gain skills in research and communications.

Can I volunteer with a friend or group? For the surveying on Tuesday, April 21st we will try to match volunteers up with teams with a range of experience. Therefore, pairs or possibly groups of three can volunteer together but not large groups.

How do I sign up?

See our registration form: [Volunteer Registration form 2020](#) If you cannot access the form, or have questions, please contact Andree Patenaude, 778-463-5247 or pit@nelsoncares.ca

Who is involved in the PiT Count Survey?

The Nelson Committee on Homelessness is coordinating the Point-In-Time Count and survey in collaboration with Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter, Aimee Beaulieu Transition House, Cicada Place, McKim Cottage, Salvation Army, Our Daily Bread, ANKORS, Nelson Women's Centre, Nelson Community Food Centre, Nelson Public Library and other partners. It is made possible through funding from Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy.

Thank you for volunteering for this important community initiative!

For more information on Point-in-Time Counts, [click here](#).
For any additional questions, please contact the coordinator:

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