NORTHEAST MN
CONTINUUM OF CARE

2026 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT INSTRUCTIONS & PLANNING GUIDE

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to support providers and communities across the Northeast Minnesota Continuum of Care (NE CoC) in planning and carrying out the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count in ways that are realistic, flexible, and HUD-compliant.

KEY INFORMATION

KEY DATES

- **PIT Night:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026
- **Survey Window:** January 26 - 30, 2026
- **Regional PIT Training (Virtual):** 10:00am – 11:30am, January 19th
- **Deadline to Submit Surveys:** February 13, 2026

REGIONAL PIT CONTACTS

- **Cara Oakland, NE CoC Co-Coordinator**
    - **Email:** Clundquist@live.com
    - **Phone:** 218-525-4957
- **HMIS Helpdesk** - *For questions related to HMIS or PIT Live*
    - **Email:** mnhmis@icalliances.org

ABOUT THE PIT

WHAT IS THE PIT COUNT?

- The Point-in-Time Count is an annual count of people experiencing homelessness on a given night in January.
- PIT data is used to measure progress toward ending homelessness, inform funding decisions, and support state and federal grant applications.

WHO IS COUNTED?

- **Unsheltered:** People staying outside or in places not meant for habitation.
- **Sheltered:** People staying in emergency shelter or transitional housing.
- **Doubled Up:** People temporarily staying with others (used locally, not reported to HUD).

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

NE MN COC

- Coordinates the regional PIT process
- Provides tools, training, and guidance
- Oversees PIT data quality process
- Submits PIT and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data
- Shares PIT and HIC report summaries for local and regional planning

LOCAL PIT LEADS

- Coordinate local planning
- Determine local PIT approach
- Ensure surveys and aggregate data are submitted
- Act as main point of contact for the local PIT

HOMELESS PROGRAM STAFF

- Complete surveys with unsheltered or doubled up households, including:
  - Clients on the Coordinated Entry list (complete survey during weekly follow-up)
  - Households accessing assistance during PIT week
  - Other households experiencing homelessness in the community (as capacity allows)
- Enter client data in HMIS for Emergency Shelter and Transition projects that participate in HMIS
- Complete surveys or submit aggregate data for clients staying in Emergency Shelter and/or Transitional Housing projects that are not in HMIS (i.e. Domestic Violence projects).
- Participate in local PIT planning meetings
- Promote the PIT within the local community

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & VOLUNTEERS

- Identify areas where unsheltered individuals may be staying
- Encourage unsheltered or doubled up households to contact a local homeless program and complete surveys during PIT week
- Conduct surveys with unsheltered or doubled up households if interested and able, including:
  - At local events (like a community meal or resource event)
  - In locations where unsheltered or doubled up households may be (e.g. mental health drop-in centers)
- Provide basic items that might be helpful during PIT week (e.g., hats, gloves, hand warmers, snacks, water)

TRIBAL PIT

- The NE CoC does not have permission from any Tribes in our region to conduct PIT activities on Tribal lands.

- The Minnesota Tribal Collaborative is conducting its own PIT Count this year. Surveys completed by Tribes will be included in their count and will not be added to NE CoC PIT results.

LOCAL PLANNING FLEXIBILITY

- Each county or community has the flexibility to decide what works best for conducting the 2026 PIT Count. We know that capacity and resources vary across the region, and that providers are already stretched thin.
- The PIT is important because it helps us:
  - Identify needs and trends related to homelessness in our communities
  - Secure funding for homeless programs
  - Meet HUD requirements for CoC program funding
- We understand that how you carry out the PIT may look different in each community, and that's okay.
- CoC Coordinators are available to support you with planning, marketing, and other PIT activities. Please reach out and tell us how we can be helpful.

LOCAL PIT PLANNING DECISIONS

Each local planning group is tasked with deciding:

- Who will serve as the PIT Lead(s)?

- Will you count doubled up households this year?

- Where and how surveys will be conducted?

  - With people on the Coordinated Entry list
  - With people who are unhoused and currently engaged in a homeless program
  - At scheduled times in locations where people experiencing homelessness may be (e.g. mental health drop-in centers, community centers, community meals)
  - In areas where people experiencing homelessness are likely to be staying such as truck stops, casinos, parking lots, etc.
  - Other:

- What support do you need from the CoC to carry out the PIT?

  - Outreach and marketing materials
  - Conducting PIT surveys in the community (phone surveys or schedule time slots)
  - Attend and/or facilitate local PIT planning meetings
  - Provide in-person or virtual training specific to our county
  - Print and deliver surveys
  - Create resource guides/one pagers to provide to clients
  - Other:

- When will you do surveys?
  - Local planning groups also have flexibility in deciding **when** you want to conduct surveys. The CoC's timeline is January 26th – 30th (week of), but you can adjust to meet your local needs. Keep in mind:
    - All surveys must reflect where someone slept on January 28th
    - You cannot enter surveys in PIT Live before January 28th (any surveys done before this must be on paper)
    - The cutoff date to enter surveys in PIT Live is February 13th.

PIT RESOURCES & TRAINING

STATEWIDE RESOURCES & TRAINING

Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) has PIT resources and training materials available on the HMIS website.

ICA Point-in-Time Count Training & Resources

Available Tools Include:

- 2026 PIT Survey – Printable
- 2026 PIT Unsheltered Observation Tool ← Use for **unsheltered individuals** who you cannot complete surveys with. Any observation tools completed for individuals who <u>are not</u> unsheltered cannot be included in the final PIT numbers.
- 2026 PIT Online Survey (aka PIT Live) ← You can either enter surveys directly in this form OR conduct paper surveys and enter them here later.
- 2026 Full Surveyor Guide ← Review before conducting PIT Surveys.
- 2026 One Page Survey Guide ← All surveyors should keep this on hand to reference when conducting surveys.

REGIONAL TRAINING & RESOURCES

NE COC VIRTUAL PIT TRAINING
- A regionwide virtual training will be held Friday, January 16, 2026, from 10:00 - 11:30 am via Zoom
- All PIT surveyors are strongly encouraged to attend
- Training materials will be posted on the NE CoC website
- Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84586504318

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
The CoC will provide extra materials **as requested** to support your local PIT activities. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Marketing materials (flyers, social media posts)
- Press releases
- Letters to request incentive funding or donated items

Please reach out to Cara (clundquist@live.com) and let her know what's needed.

INCENTIVES FOR 2026
- The NE CoC does not have funding for incentives for the 2026 PIT Count.
- If your community would like help identifying resources for incentives, please contact Cara.