

**Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Continuum of Care Regional Committee on
Homelessness
Maricopa County 2015 Point-In-Time Homeless Count**

What is the Point-In-Time Homeless Count?

The Point-In-Time Homeless Count is a one-night street and shelter count to determine the number of people experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County during a given point-in-time. The count includes a brief survey to identify some characteristics of people experiencing homelessness in the community. As the lead agency for the Maricopa County Continuum of Care, MAG coordinates the regional count each year.

When will the 2015 Point-In-Time Homeless Count take place?

The street count will occur on Tuesday, February 24, 2015 from 5:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. The shelter count will be conducted through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and will reflect the number of people sheltered the night of Monday, February 23, 2015.

Why a Point-In-Time Homeless Count?

Better understand homelessness:

The Point-In-Time Homeless count is an effort to learn more about the individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County. In order to accomplish community goals and make a difference in the lives of homeless men, women, children, we first need to know who they are, where they are, and better understand the factors that led to their homelessness.

Bring resources to the community/measure progress:

The data gathered in the count can be used to measure progress and make the case for additional resources. Data from the count also helps to indicate how well we are meeting community goals to prevent and end homelessness.

Drive Engagement:

The Point-In-Time Homeless count will bring together community leaders, volunteers and persons experiencing homelessness on one night with a common goal of better understanding the extent of homelessness in our community. This unique opportunity will increase awareness of homelessness and create a venue to drive further discussion and engagement toward ending homelessness.

Required to receive funding:

Our community relies on federal, state, and local funding to support a wide range of housing and services for homeless individuals and families. Communities that receive federal funding for homeless assistance from The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are required to conduct a comprehensive Point-In-Time Homeless count during the last ten days of January. In addition to fulfilling federal requirements, the Point-In-Time Homeless count helps local governments and nonprofits more effectively allocate resources necessary to meet the needs of the homeless population in the community.

Who will be counted?

The Point-In-Time Homeless count aims to quantify the number of individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. This includes homeless veterans, families, youth, and single adults sleeping on the streets and in emergency and transitional shelters. The count does NOT include persons who are housed in doubled-up living situations or persons who are about to become homeless.

Who coordinates the Point-In-Time Homeless Count?

The count is coordinated by the MAG Continuum of Care (CoC) Regional Committee on Homelessness in partnership with coordinators across the region. Data are reported to HUD on an annual basis to track

and measure progress on goals toward ending homelessness. The lead agency works with coordinators throughout the region to identify volunteers as well as locations in the city/town that tend to have a high number of homeless people.

Methodology

Maricopa County will utilize a '*count plus survey*' approach. This means that a brief survey will be administered in addition to the count. The survey will collect some demographic information, subpopulation information, and other data about persons who are homeless. The count will be regional in scope, utilizing a consistent methodology throughout the entire region. Both a sheltered and unsheltered count will be conducted in 2015.

Unsheltered Count: The CoC lead agency (MAG) will work with regional coordinators throughout the county to ensure that the entire area is covered on the night of the count. The approach to cover the vast geographic area of Maricopa County will include a complete coverage as well as a random sampling approach. First, the region will be categorized into separate sections based on the density of homeless persons in the area. High density areas are areas consisting of ten or more homeless persons on a regular basis. Medium-density areas are areas consisting of five to ten homeless persons on a regular basis. Low-density areas are areas consisting of five or less homeless persons on a regular basis. The complete coverage approach will apply to small cities and towns in the region as well as high-density areas in large cities. Complete coverage means that all parts of the geography in the city or town will be covered. For large cities, a complete coverage approach combined with a random sampling approach will be used. Random sampling means that areas will be identified into low, medium, or high density categories. All low-density areas will be randomly selected for counting. Medium and high-density areas will utilize a complete coverage approach.

On the night of the count, teams of volunteers, service providers and others will search the streets to count and survey men, women, and children who are homeless. At the assigned time, volunteers will meet, be trained, given supplies, assigned an area to survey and be dispatched in survey teams. Volunteers will conduct brief surveys with the homeless persons in their assigned area and then return to the meeting place to drop off their completed surveys. Volunteer coordinators will be trained in advance of the count and volunteer counters will be trained on the night of the count. Teams will be assigned their counting area and will canvass the streets during the hours of the count. Once the count has ended, volunteers will return to the training area to turn in their completed surveys.

Cities and towns will have the opportunity to opt-in to participate in the regional approach. A city/town that opts-in will be able to join other cities/towns in the pooling of volunteers, regional training, and other resources to conduct a regional count. Cities/towns that opt-out of the regional approach will still follow the Point-In-Time Homeless count requirements established by HUD and the CoC to ensure that a consistent approach is followed in the implementation of the count and survey.

Shelter Count: The shelter count will include all emergency shelters, transitional shelters, and the safe haven throughout the region. Data for the shelter count will be collected through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS is an electronic database used by shelter providers to collect information about the individuals and families served in shelter. MAG will coordinate with the shelter providers and Community Information and Referral, the HMIS lead agency, to obtain the data necessary from HMIS for the Point-In-Time Homeless shelter count. The shelter count will take place on the same night as the street count. Shelters not using HMIS will complete an electronic survey with the data needed to complete the Point-In-Time Homeless count.

Who should participate in the 2015 Homeless Count?

In order to conduct a comprehensive count of homeless individuals and families in Maricopa County, community volunteers are needed. Volunteering in the Point-In-Time Homeless Count is open to anyone

interested. Examples of volunteer groups include faith based groups, neighborhood associations, homeless service providers, and homeless outreach teams, city staff, volunteer groups, community leaders, and students with required volunteer hours to graduate. For more information or to sign-up to participate in the 2015 Point-In-Time Homeless Count visit www.azmag.gov and click on the Point-In Time Homeless Count link. For any additional questions please contact Celina Brun at cbrun@azmag.gov.