

Observations from the 2022 Unsheltered PIT Count

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have ongoing impacts on unsheltered homelessness.

There was a significant shift in geography and locations of persons encountered experiencing unsheltered homelessness from 2021 to 2022 (i.e., Carol Stream vs. West Chicago; gas stations vs. train stations).

When conducting an observation only count, any and all information is important for future follow up. However, demographic information can't be assumed by observation and without confirmation is difficult to interpret when used in a public facing dashboard. When at all possible, survey data is preferred.

The importance of teams connecting with those persons in their assigned geography.

Recommendations for the 2023 Unsheltered PIT Count

Allow for additional time for Point in Time Count planning.

Employ full training on the use of the mobile app; create a virtual "role play" scenario using a multi-member household and observation only count household as examples.

Expansion of geographic territories where teams are assigned to an area where there is historically no known location activity involving persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Putting out flyers in the train stations and other public places for the week or so prior to the count, sharing information on what will take place the night of the count.

Engage community partners to assist with the communication of information county-wide to improve and amplify the efforts of Point in Time Count volunteers.

Further engagement of law enforcement ahead of the Point in Time Count to identify high probability unsheltered locations.

2022 Unsheltered Point in Time Count by the Numbers

Total number of persons
ENCOUNTERED during the
2022 PIT Count:

31

Number of persons
OBSERVED during the 2022
PIT Count:

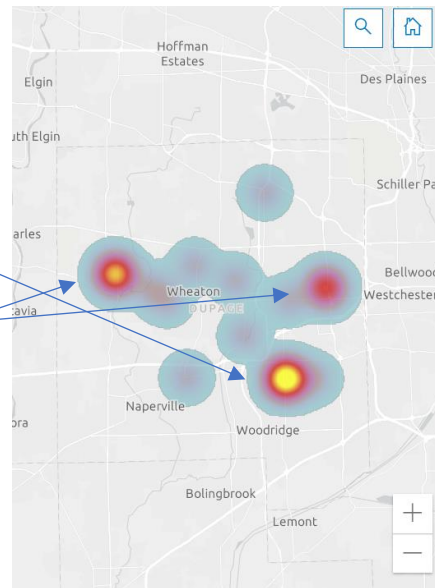
23

Number of persons
INTERVIEWED during the
2022 PIT Count:

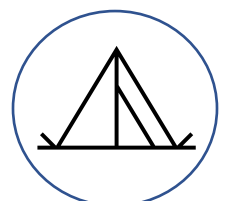
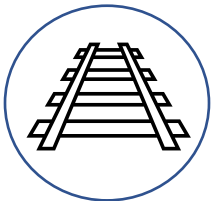
8

In What Communities Were Persons Encountered?

- Addison – 1
- Carol Stream – 1
- Downers Grove – 10**
- Glen Ellyn – 2
- Lombard – 1
- Naperville – 1
- Villa Park – 5**
- West Chicago – 7**
- Westmont – 1
- Wheaton – 1
- Winfield – 1



Where in the Community Were Persons Encountered?



13

8

6

2

1

1

Train Station

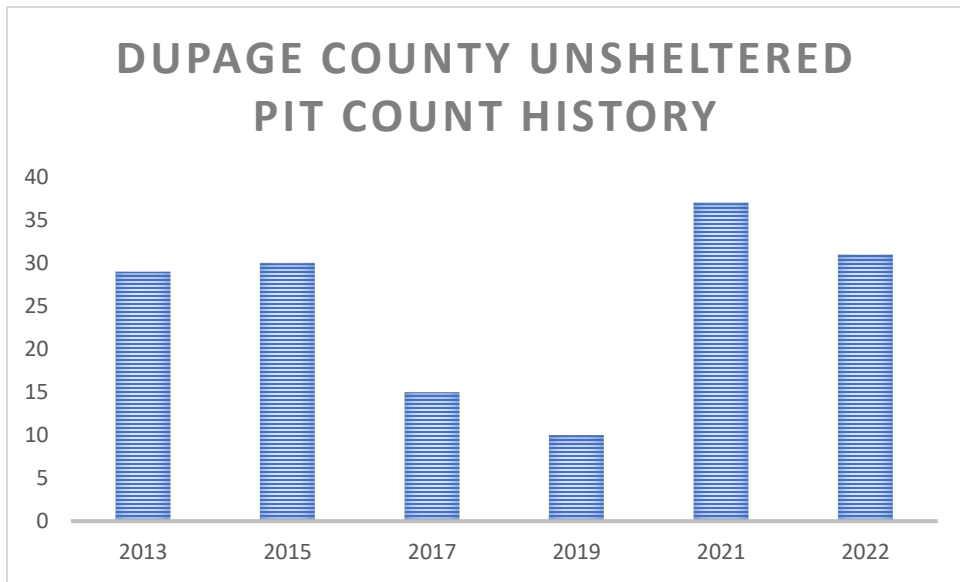
Vehicle

Parking Garage

Front of Building

Police Dept.

Tent



NEW this year

4.3 Counting People in Ambiguous Sleeping Locations

When people are displaced from housing, they use whatever sleeping arrangements that are available to them. In some locations, people are clearly unsheltered, sheltered, or housed (i.e., the person does not meet the definition of homeless), while the housing status of people in other sleeping locations is ambiguous. HUD is providing the following guidelines to determine how to characterize someone's sleeping situation for the purposes of the PIT count.

2) Vehicles:

(a) Cars, trucks, and vans: Households sleeping in cars, trucks, and vans are to be counted as unsheltered. This includes households sleeping in their vehicles in safe parking programs, in designated areas, or on a campus maintained by a government or other entity where toilets, showers, and communal food preparation or food service areas are provided.

	Survey Only	Observation Only	Both Survey & Observation
2013	X		
2015	X		
2017	X		
2019	X		
2021		X	
2022			X

2022 DuPage County Point in Time Count Narrative

The 2022 methodology of a complete count strategy coverage count strategy for our Unsheltered Count was presented to DuPage Continuum of Care (CoC) Leadership during the 12/08/21 Leadership Committee meeting. Trained volunteers, in teams, were assigned specific geographic locations within the CoC jurisdiction for complete coverage. Geographic locations were assigned prior to the Point in Time (PIT) night of the count. Larger teams were established for those areas requiring extensive geographic coverage.

The DuPage CoC used the following standards when conducting an unsheltered count of people who were experiencing homelessness and unsheltered on the night of the count: 1) the DuPage CoC accounts for and reports on all unsheltered homeless people in the CoC's geography through a complete coverage method that is consistent with HUD standards and guidance, and 2) the DuPage CoC must be able to verify that the unsheltered homeless people identified in the count were unsheltered on the night designated for the count, as defined in Homeless Definition Final Rule: "An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground."

Also included in the count strategy and training was additional guidance as outlined in the 11/05/21 Notice CPD-21-12: HIC and PIT Count Data Collection for CoC and ESG Programs:

4.3 Counting People in Ambiguous Sleeping Locations

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Specialized teams of experienced staff and volunteers covered "hot spots" which included known locations persons experiencing homelessness and those high probability areas as reported to us by persons with lived experience of homelessness, law enforcement, and Street Outreach. As safety allowed, volunteers asked individuals

who appeared to be experiencing homelessness if they would be willing to participate in a survey. Volunteers were instructed to record survey responses exactly as reported to them by the individual. When an individual refused to participate or when the PIT Count volunteer did not feel safe engaging, information was gathered by observation. Individuals were counted regardless of whether they agreed to participate in the survey. To ensure that individuals were not counted twice, respondents were asked if they participated in survey activity earlier in the night and to provide their initials and date of birth. If an observation only count was conducted, detailed information about the location, the individual/s, and their surroundings (i.e., make/model of vehicle, location, clothing, identifying features, etc.) were also recorded.

Training was provided to all volunteers prior to the PIT Count for improved count accuracy and safety. The DuPage CoC engaged the use of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to cover areas such as the local forest preserves, the Illinois Prairie Path, the Great Western Trail and the Prairie Path which may be difficult for volunteers. CERT also covered areas that were unassigned to community volunteers due to staffing or volunteer shortages.

Considerations:

The PIT count captures a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness at a moment in time rather than everyone who experiences homelessness in a year.

The PIT count does not capture persons experiencing housing instability, but rather focuses on those who meet HUD's definition of homelessness.

PIT counts are important because they help communities plan services and programs to appropriately address local needs, measure progress in decreasing homelessness, and identify strengths and gaps in a community's current homelessness assistance system. The first of these counts was conducted in January 2003. Collecting data on homelessness and tracking progress can help to inform public education, increase public awareness, and attract resources that will lead towards progress in preventing and ending homelessness.