



Unsheltered Point-in-Time Count

January 22 to February 2, 2024

The Regional Homelessness Authority, with the help of community volunteers, is conducting a project to understand how many people are experiencing unsheltered homelessness across King County. This includes people sleeping outside, in tents, in cars or RVs, or in other locations not meant for human habitation. The project is called the “unsheltered Point-in-Time (PIT) Count” and it is required every other year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In addition to collecting data about the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, the project also collects demographic data, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, parental status, veteran status, whether a person has experienced domestic violence, serious mental illness, substance use disorder, and whether a person is chronically homeless as defined by HUD. Data is collected using a digital survey, language translation is available, and people experiencing homelessness are compensated for their time with a Visa Gift Card.

Methodology

Data collection takes place over two weeks, at 17 locations, using a Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) methodology approved by HUD and designed in collaboration with researchers at the University of Washington. RDS is a sampling methodology that only requires us to engage with a small number of people living outside to extrapolate the overall number of people living unsheltered.

The PIT Count is an important tool to help track demographics and illuminate year-over-year trends for the region. While the RDS methodology provides a more accurate snapshot than the traditional one-night street count, it is still likely an undercount.

For planning and accountability purposes, KCRHA will continue to work towards a system that is responsive to the 53,000 people who experience homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, over the course of a year in King County.

How You Can Help

You can be part of the solution to homelessness by donating directly to shelters, food banks, and other nonprofit service providers. Visit the resources page on our website for ideas on how to help.