

2024 PIT Methodology



Rural Nevada CONTINUUM OF CARE

Last Edited: 8/6/24

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1. Introduction

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a critical activity for the Rural Nevada Continuum of Care (RNCoC). It provides a snapshot of homelessness in our community on a single night in January. The data collected during the PIT count helps to inform local planning, policy development, and resource allocation to address homelessness.

2. Purpose

The primary objectives of the PIT count are to:

- Estimate the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Understand the demographics and subpopulations of those experiencing homelessness.
- Identify trends and changes to homelessness and track progress toward ending homelessness.
- Help communities understand gaps and strategize around the best ways to utilize resources and respond to gaps in services.
- Identify trends and changes in homelessness over time.
- Fulfill HUD requirements for federal funding.

Results of the RNCoC annual PIT Counts and Reports are routinely used by providers, funders and organizers of the homeless service system including:

- ▷ Nevada Rural Housing Authority
- ▷ State of Nevada Housing Division
- ▷ Nevada Interagency Council on Homelessness
- ▷ Provisional Assistance Through Housing (PATH)
- ▷ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- ▷ Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

3. Planning and Coordination

Winged Wolf Innovations, LLC led coordination efforts of all PIT Count activities. The PIT count is planned and coordinated by the RNCoC in collaboration with local government agencies, service providers, volunteers, and other stakeholders. PIT count planning for the RNCoC convened in November 2024. Individual meetings were established with county leads for each of the respective communities that comprise the RNCoC. Winged Wolf Innovations, LLC participated in HUD PIT Count Office Hours and developed a video and a PIT guide to align count methodology across each geographic region. PIT training included background and historical information for PIT Count efforts, PIT count methodology guidance, and instructional video for utilizing the application to conduct the PIT count.

4. Methodology

RNCOC conducted the PIT count and all mandated components on January 24, 2024. HUD requires all CoCs complete a count of sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness every year but only requires a count of unsheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness every other year. The RNCOC has elected to conduct both counts every year and has identified an opportunity to incorporate summer counts in the future to provide a more comprehensive picture of those experiencing homelessness throughout the 15 counties and cities that comprise the RNCOC. In addition to the sheltered and unsheltered count, RNCOC elected to complete a school count.

PIT Components

In previous years, RNCOC conducted additional count components but elected not to include a Motel Count and In-depth Interviews in 2024 count activities. Through planning and coordination efforts, County leads identified these two components as not relevant to the count of those experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, data was not utilized to inform funding decisions. Winged Wolf, LLC in conjunction with County leads coordinated the following count activities:

Unsheltered Count

Per HUD regulation, CoCs must conduct an unsheltered count of those living in a place not meant for human habitation at least every other year. Also referred to as a street count, identifies and counts all individuals living in cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned building or encampments. County and City jurisdictional lead agencies coordinated with local law enforcement, social service agencies, homeless service providers and community volunteers to complete a survey or observation count on those experiencing homeless.

During the 2024 PIT Count, the RNCOC elected to utilize a counting app as it had in prior years to count and collect survey data of those experience homelessness. The RNCOC elected to utilize funds from the CoC Planning grant to contract with Simtech Solutions and utilize “Counting Us” to collect unsheltered data, including observational tally and survey information from count participants. The “Counting Us” application was used by the RNCOC in prior count years, however an instructional video on how to download and utilize the application was provided to all County lead agencies.

Due to the vast land area throughout the geographic region of the RNCOC, many County leads identified concerns with data and cellular coverage. To mitigate concerns with cell coverage and the use of the app, paper forms were provided to count teams. Observations and surveys completed via paper form were later electronically entered into the Counting Us application to streamline data review and validation.

The RNCoc elected to count vehicles, tents, RVs not connected to service, and abandoned buildings and structures. The Counting Us application presented several limitations during the 2024 RNCoc count, as such we were not able to utilize the application to count identified building and structures. County leads and volunteers were provided forms to tally and comment on these structures and provide baseline data to consider during future count years.

Sheltered Count

Per HUD, CoCs must conduct a sheltered count annually, which counts the number of individuals residing in an Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, or Safe Haven program on the night of the count. Data informing the sheltered count for the 2024 PIT Count was extracted from the community's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The community is aware of several agencies that provide these services throughout the geographic region but do not participate in HMIS. Data for these providers was manually collected by Winged Wolf Innovations, LLC. Bitfocus collaborated with Winged Wolf Innovations, to review and validate HMIS data. County leads were asked to conduct an ad hoc survey and collect data on all individuals and families residing in Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing or Safe Haven during the count throughout the geographic region to compare HMIS with information collected.

School Count

Winged Wolf Innovations, LLC collaborated with McKinney Vento liaisons for each of the school districts represented throughout the 15 counties and cities that represent the RNCoc. Although this information is not reported to HUD like, the data collected provides insight on the number of children experiencing homelessness or housing instability throughout Rural Nevada. Winged Wolf Innovations communicated with liaisons in the months leading up to the count. In early January 2024, Winged Wolf Innovations, provided each liaison with access to Google forms to complete surveys and identify the number of kids that were in emergency shelter, hotel or motel, transitional housing, foster placement or other living situation not identified.

5. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance measures were implemented to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. These measures include:

- Pre-count testing of survey instruments and technology.
- Real-time data validation and error checking.
- Post-count data cleaning and verification processes.
- De-duplication of records to avoid double counting.

At the conclusion of the PIT count, Winged Wolf Innovations, LLC was analyzed to generate infographics and provide reports and summaries to each County and jurisdiction:

- Total number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Demographic and subpopulation breakdowns.
- Comparative analysis with previous PIT counts.
- Identification of trends and emerging issues.

6. Dissemination and Use of Data

The findings from the PIT count will be shared with:

- HUD, as required for federal reporting.
- Local government agencies and policymakers.
- Service providers and community stakeholders.
- The general public, through a published report and presentations.

The RNCoc is committed to conducting a thorough and accurate PIT count to better understand and address homelessness in our community. Through collaboration, detailed planning, and rigorous data collection methodologies, we aim to use the findings to drive meaningful change and improve outcomes for those experiencing homelessness.