

Overall, it is suggested that individuals reach out to their local Hub Coordinator to get location-specific answers. Hub Coordinators can be contacted through the Maine PIT website on this page - <https://www.maineplit.org/hubs.html>.

Q: What volunteer roles are available?

A: Each Hub will have different volunteer roles depending on their needs, but typically, volunteer roles include the following:

On the night of the count and/or on the service-based days that follow

- Administering the survey to individuals experiencing homelessness at designated locations (note: typically, community volunteers do not go out into encampments unless there is a set plan in a specific location)
- Assisting agencies with local efforts to support individuals (e.g. serving food)
- Data entry of paper surveys

Prior to the count

- Collecting and/or assembling donations (e.g. warming kits, first aid kits)

Q: Who is a good fit for volunteering?

Volunteers who are interacting directly with people experiencing homelessness (surveying, serving food, etc.) should be compassionate and patient. Those specifically administering the survey should be good listeners as well. Many of the survey questions are very personal and it is important to be neutral but supportive of the individual as they are sharing their answers. The training will go into more detail on how to do this.

Q: What technology and/or skills are needed to volunteer?

For those administering the survey, it is ideal if they have their own smart device, have downloaded the Counting Us app ahead of the survey, and tried out the demo version to ensure they are comfortable using it. It is also possible to fill out the survey on a computer if the volunteer is set up at an agency that can provide them a computer, or the volunteer has their own laptop and can connect to the internet.

For those who do not have a smart device but would be willing to use one, please contact your Hub Coordinator. For those that prefer paper, handwriting must be legible and minimum required information must be collected so the individual can be counted.

Q: Who is overseeing the effort?

The PIT Count is managed by the nine Homeless Response Hub Coordinators, in partnership with the Maine Continuum of Care and MaineHousing.

Q: Who are the participating partner agencies?

Typically, direct service providers and other agencies who interface with individuals experiencing homelessness will partner with the Hub Coordinators on conducting an effective local count. The specific agencies vary on a Hub by Hub basis.

Q: Who would I be interacting/partnering with?

Your main point of contact is your local Hub Coordinator. Regions and contact forms can be found here: <https://www.maineplit.org/hubs.html>. There may be other providers or agencies that you interface with depending on how your Hub conducts the count.

Q: What is the minimum information is need to collect in order for the individual to be counted?

At minimum, please collect as much of the individual's name and date of birth as possible, and the location they slept on the night of Wednesday, January 22. Getting partial information on name and date of birth is okay (e.g. first name, last initial, birth year), but please get as much information as possible. For those with a household of two or more people, you must also get head of household/relationship to head of household information.

If there is one person being surveyed but is in a household of two or more, get as much information on the other household members as possible (with the minimum information being the same as for an individual). For example, if one person in a couple is being surveyed, ask them if they can share their partner/spouse's information. If parents of minor children are surveyed, ask if they can share their child/children's information.

This is easier on the app, as it will prompt you to complete additional information if you select a household size of 2 or more. If you are completing the survey on paper, there must be a separate survey for each member.

Q: What is a household / what is a head of household?

A household is either an individual on their own or any group of 2+ people that consider themselves a unit. The head of household is one adult in the household, as chosen by the participant(s). All other members of the family are designated in relation to the head of household – spouse/partner, child, other relative, or unrelated.

For more information on households, please visit this page:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/3123/how-should-i-be-counting-people-and-households-experiencing-chronic/>.

Q: How does my contribution fit into the bigger system?

There are efforts statewide to coordinate service providers and volunteers in order to conduct an effective count that locates and surveys everyone experiencing homelessness in Maine. Every participating individual is key in ensuring the count runs smoothly and that individuals are engaged and provided assistance when possible. This count is an important snapshot of homelessness in Maine and influences the amount of federal funding Maine receives to address homelessness.

Q: Where will I be asked to volunteer? What are my time/shift options?

Exact locations and times will vary from Hub to Hub, but volunteer opportunities will either be on the night of the count (Wed, Jan 22) or on the service-based count days that follow (Thurs, Jan 23 to Wed, Jan 29). Locations will typically be at local service providers – e.g. day centers, libraries, food pantries, etc.

Q: How/when/where do I access the training?

The training will be posted to the website when ready in early January. If you would like to be notified when the training is posted, please ensure that you have signed up on the volunteer page of the website here – <https://www.maineipit.org/volunteer.html>.

Q: What support do I have access to as a volunteer?

We will always ensure that volunteers are supported by a service provider and/or paired up with another volunteer. Volunteers should not go out to do surveys in the community on their own, always make sure to buddy up or partner with a local service provider.

Q: What supplies do I need / will be provided to me as a volunteer? (weather gear, clipboard, electronic device, pens, flashlight)

Supplies are dependent on the type of volunteer shift and will be communicated by your Hub Coordinator or team lead. It is encouraged to have the Counting Us app downloaded onto your personal cell phone or tablet (or work cell phone if preferred, and if permitted by your employer) in advance, to ensure you have registered and learned how the platform works before you are surveying individuals.