

# EVERYONE COUNTS 2020

## Standards for Participation in the Coordinated Count

Recognizing the need to balance methodological rigour and community flexibility, the Reaching Home Point-in-Time (PiT) Count approach includes *Core Standards* for the methodology that will be consistent across communities, while allowing flexibility for the approach to be tailored to each community's local context. The approach also includes *Recommended Standards*, based on effective practices used by communities in Canada. Communities are encouraged to adopt these standards.

If you have any questions about these standards, contact [hpsr@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:hpsr@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca).

### CORE STANDARDS

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**Core Standard 1:** The PiT count results in an enumeration, which is defined as the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night between March 1 and April 30, 2020.

**Core Standard 2:** The methodology and survey used by the community includes the Core Screening and Survey Questions, and the Core Locations described in this guide.

**Core Standard 3:** The PiT count is led by the Reaching Home Community Entity (CE), the Indigenous Homelessness CE, a collaboration between the two, or by a third-party contracted to lead the count.

**Core Standard 4:** The local implementation of the PiT count is based on consultations with relevant local partners, including the CE, the Community Advisory Board (CAB) as well as the Indigenous Homelessness CE and CAB, where applicable. The local methodology is approved by the CE and Indigenous Homelessness CE, where applicable. The PiT count lead is required to submit an interim report (using a template provided) to ESDC describing the local methodology by January 31, 2020.

**Core Standard 5:** The results of the PiT count are reported to ESDC via the **Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS; see [hifis.ca](http://hifis.ca))**, or another approved tool. In order for the data to be integrated into the national database, data must be provided in a format consistent with that database (guidance to be provided by ESDC). This information will contribute to the understanding of homelessness across Canada, and will not be used to publicly report on findings from individual communities.

**Core Standard 6:** Sheltered counts are based on the number of individuals staying in emergency shelters, extreme weather shelters, and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, on one night of the year. Where applicable, it may also include families or individuals who received hotel/motel vouchers in lieu of shelter beds. Note that surveys done in shelters are not used to determine the enumeration, but rather to provide information on the sheltered population.

**Core Standard 7:** Transitional housing counts are based on the number of people in transitional housing or transitional shelter programs on a single night. These programs typically provide longer-term housing solutions with supports intended to help individuals transition from homelessness to secure housing.



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**Core Standard 8:** Sheltered counts are based on data collected by shelter data systems, where available, (e.g. HIFIS). Large communities may use a sampling approach for their shelter survey (e.g., a representative sample of the shelters or shelter residents), but they must explain their sampling strategy.

**Core Standard 9:** Unsheltered counts are based on a street survey conducted on the night of the enumeration, or the following day. This survey can cover the entire community, known locations within a community, a sample of neighbourhoods, or it can use a mixed approach. The survey can include streets, alleys, parks and other public locations, transit stations, abandoned buildings, vehicles, ravines, and other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep.

**Core Standard 10:** The PiT Count lead is responsible for the quality of data collected. Efforts should be made to ensure that each person is counted only once to limit double-counting, through the survey itself and through de-duplication of the data. The lead is also responsible for ensuring that staff and volunteers receive the adequate training, including the count standards, survey procedures, data management and privacy, and personal safety.

**Core Standard 11:** The results of the count are to be communicated to the community. Particular effort should be made to communicate the findings to count partners, those who work in the sector and those who experience homelessness.

## RECOMMENDED STANDARDS

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**Recommended Standard 1:** The local community PiT count approach (for example, additional survey questions or populations, areas to be surveyed, etc.) should be based on consultations with relevant sectors involved in homelessness, including the CABs, the Indigenous community, the municipality, shelters and other homelessness service providers, people with lived experience of homelessness, local police and emergency services, and transit authorities, among others. Cooperation with these sectors will contribute to the successful implementation of the count.

**Recommended Standard 2:** If possible, the local PiT count report can include data from local public systems—including correctional facilities, juvenile detention centres, hospitals, detox centres—for people who have no fixed address and who are imminently going to be released, but have no discharge plan that includes housing. This number is not included in the Core Enumeration.

**Recommended Standard 3:** The PiT count coordinator should work closely with the HIFIS Lead or the lead for managing community shelter data, as well as any other local shelter data coordinator, where applicable.

**Recommended Standard 4:** The results should be shared with the respective province or territory. Where the municipality has a requirement to enumerate homelessness, the CE should work with the municipality to ensure that the count meets their requirements, and should ensure that the municipality has access to the data necessary to report out.

**Recommended Standard 5:** While not part of the count, it may be useful to track contextual data that helps to explain changes in the population between years. This can include information such as rental vacancy rates, the number of people in core housing need, and the number of people in permanent supportive housing (Housing First) or long-term transitional housing.

